LITTLE LIVES OF THE SAINTS FOR CHILDREN

THE DIVINE CHILD JESUS

LIVES OF THE SAINTS FOR CHILDREN

BY

TH. BERTHOLD.

With Twelve Illustrations

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LIVES OF THE SAINTS FOR CHILDREN.

THE CHILD JESUS.

My dear children, a more beautiful union than that which had its beginning beside the manger in Bethlehem on Holy Night was never seen on earth.

Wrapped in swaddling-cloths a new-born Child, wondrously fair and bathed in a halo of light, lay in the manger. It was God made man, Our Saviour Jesus Christ. Mary, the holy Mother, leaned over the Child. Then she held out her mother-arms, and to the face of the Infant there came a smile that delighted the angels in heaven. On the other side of the manger stood Joseph, silent and dignified,—the blessed foster-father of Jesus,—in mute adoration, offering up

his time, his work, his love to the holy Child. And the Child turned His sweet face upon Joseph, too, and blessed and strengthened him by that look, so that he might have the grace to be the worthy guardian of his Lord. The Holy Family is the name of the blessed union which we see for the first time at Bethlehem. Over it heaven opens and God the Father looks down upon His Son, the Good of all good, given into the keeping of Mary and Joseph.

"Jesus, Mary, and Joseph!" Speak these holy names often, especially when you are tempted to do wrong, for a wonderful grace is in them.

Not as the mighty Judge to whom the chosen people of the Old Testament looked up in fear and trembling did Our Lord and Saviour come upon the earth to save us. His infinite love moved Him to become a weak and helpless Child, that we might go to Him without awe, full of trusting faith and utter resignation. And it is for the love of children, therefore, that the loving heart of the Child of Bethlehem longs most. Do you know that, you little ones, who are still in the tender years of innocence? But the big ones are meant, too. They must become as children, simple, patient, humble child-souls, full of trust and good will, if they would know the whole sweet-

ness of the Christ-Child, if the peace greeting of the angels is to be a blessed truth to them.

To suffer and to die for a sinful world the Child Jesus came. His suffering begins even with His birth. In the time of winter, in a stable, in poverty, Jesus is born. And He loves this poverty and has chosen it to draw those to Him who have none of this world's goods. Poor shepherds are those to whom He first reveals Himself, and not to the great and the distinguished of the world.

Do you, too, love poverty. Do not pass it by in pride, but remember that the poor are the special friends of God.

From His birth the Christ-Child loved His Mother. In her arms He receives the adoration of the shepherds due to His divinity. In this way Jesus wants to let His Mother share in His glory and to lend to her a reflection of His eternal light.

The Child Jesus loved His foster-father from His birth, too. By that first look He raised him to a height of inexpressible grace and holiness.

So, children, you also should love your parents. As the Child Jesus loved and honored His parents, so should you, too. A particular reward is promised for obeying the Fourth Commandment.

Eight days after the birth of the Christ-Child

He was circumcised. Circumcision was commanded by God in the Old Testament. It was the mark by which the Israelite was taken into the covenant of the chosen people of God. It was also a reminder of original sin and the atonement that must follow. Mary knew well that her Child, as the Son of God, needed no atonement and no circumcision, but with willing obedience she allowed the painful ceremony to be performed. And Jesus suffered it, because it was His wish to suffer.

Bear all pains, dear children, with patience for the sake of the suffering Saviour.

The Wise Men from the East, guided by the star, came and adored the Child and laid their gifts at His feet. How the heart of Mary must have rejoiced to see her Child so honored and adored! And while the Wise Men knelt, Jesus rested in her arms. How they must have looked with eyes of veneration upon the Blessed Virgin!

Always try to give your parents pleasure, children.

Forty days after His birth Jesus was presented to the Lord in the Temple at Jerusalem. Here the aged and God-fearing Simeon recognized the Child as the promised Messias. He took Him in His arms, praised God, and said: "Now Thou

dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word in peace: because my eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples. A light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel." And the Child's father and Mother were wondering at these things which were spoken of Him. And then Simeon blessed them and said: "Behold this Child is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted: and thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed." And Mary, in her anxiety for her beloved Child, then felt the first pang of that sword which was to pierce her mother-heart seven times.

And then a prophetess in the Temple, Anna, coming in, confessed to the Lord: and spoke of Him to all that looked for the redemption of Israel. And after they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their city Nazareth. And the Child grew, and waxed strong, full of wisdom: and the grace of God was in Him."

Pray often, children, to the Child Jesus that the wisdom and grace of God may dwell in you, too.

At the bidding of an angel, Mary and Joseph had to fly to Egypt to escape the bloody plans of Herod. This was the second pang that came to the heart of Mary. The holy parents guarded the Child most faithfully. They had to contend with many dangers and hardships, but Mary and Joseph bore them all with heavenly patience, and the divine Child was eager to suffer on earth for our sake. And do we strive to deserve this great love?

After the death of Herod the Holy Family returned to Galilee, at the bidding again of an angel. And there they took up their dwelling in the house at Nazareth. Here the Holy Family passed a few years in sweetest peace and undisturbed quiet.

When the Boy Jesus was twelve years old, Mary and Joseph took Him up to Jerusalem, according to the Jewish law. In the Temple the Easter feast, the Passover, was being celebrated. When the days of the feast were at an end the holy parents prepared to return. But, oh woe! the Child could not be found. By a provision of Providence He had remained behind in the Temple. He seated Himself among the Scribes and listened to them and questioned them. And all who heard Him were astounded at His under-

standing and at His answers. In the meantime Mary and Joseph were in the greatest anxiety. At last they consoled themselves with the thought that Jesus might be with their kinsfolks and friends and have gone on with them. So they left Jerusalem and went home. But imagine their fright when they arrived at the place of the first night-rest and did not find the Boy Jesus! They at once returned to Jerusalem and sought for three days with sore-distressed hearts for the Boy. And then Mary received the third pang which was to pierce her loving mother-heart. On the third day they found Jesus seated among the Scribes in the Temple, listening and questioning while all marvelled. Their anxiety was turned into rejoicing, but the holy Mother had suffered too much to forget at once. So she said to Jesus: "My Son, why hast Thou done so to us?" Jesus was surprised that they should not have guessed where He was. He answered, therefore, with the meaning words: "Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

Truly, a pointed lesson for all children to be diligent in visiting the house of God and to attend the Holy Sacrifice, as well as the sermons!

The Boy Jesus now went back to Nazareth with Mary and Joseph and "was subject to them. And

His Mother kept all these words in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men."

The hidden life of Jesus, as the Scriptures describe the life of Jesus after the first stay in the Temple, should be your particular example. Quietly and simply Jesus lived in Nazareth. He helped His father, the carpenter, faithfully at his labors, and read the wishes of His Mother in her eyes. Prayerfully and laboriously His days passed until He was thirty years old, when His public teaching began. Up to that time Jesus, the eternal God, remained obedient to human beings. How many a child that has barely outgrown school wants to act independently and without consideration of its parents, to their bitter grief and to its own destruction! How humble was Jesus at all times! He had a high mission to fulfil, yet He was not eager to rush into public life. In the workshop of a carpenter He shut Himself up. How many a youth full of great plans leaves his father's house because its life is too narrow! How many a one is ashamed of the humble standing of his father! Christ lived in innocence in the house of His parents up to the time of His thirtieth year.

Children should often contemplate the life

of the Child Jesus, for it is the mirror of all virtues for them.

They should do this particularly at Christmas-time—the glad, merry, blessed grace-bringing time. Look upon the beautiful feast not only as a time of many presents, gay pleasures, Christmas-trees, and so on, but prepare rather a manger in your own heart by prompt obedience, ardent prayer, and little sacrifices, that you may become worthy of receiving the Christ-Child in your heart as the sweetest and dearest gift of the season.

ST. AGNES.

St. Agnes, virgin and martyr, was born in Rome 291 years after the birth of Christ. Her parents were rich Christians, and the name given her means "lamb." A lovely name and one of great meaning, when we remember that it meant that Agnes would follow forever the spotless Lamb of God.

Even in her tenderest childhood Agnes was full of the fear of God and faithfully obeyed His commandments. Above all she loved purity, that most precious ornament of the Christian soul. In her tenth year she vowed herself to eternal virginity and chose to be a spouse of Christ. In angelic innocence, in prayer, and in works of charity her days passed gently. Thus she grew to be thirteen years old.

In those far-away times it was the custom of parents to betroth their children in early youth. Then later the marriage took place. And thus it happened that Agnes, one day when she was re-

turning from a house to which she went to receive instruction, was seen by a pagan youth, the son of the tribune Symphronius. Her lovely appearance and noble bearing so pleased the youth that he wished to become betrothed to her. He made his desire known to his parents, and to win the favor of Agnes offered her presents of costly pearls and precious stones. Many another maiden would have been dazzled by these gifts, but Agnes only answered:

"Do not try to win me, for I can not consent, as I am promised to another."

The pagan youth did not dream that she spoke of Christ, and that she was a Christian. He thought instead that the maiden was promised to some one else, and grieved so over her loss that he became ill. Then his father sent for Agnes and said to her: "See, my son is pining away and will die for your sake."

Agnes answered gently: "And am I permitted to break the promise I gave my first Bridegroom?"

"Who," asked the tribune, "is this Bridegroom to whom you have plighted your troth and whom you prefer to my son?"

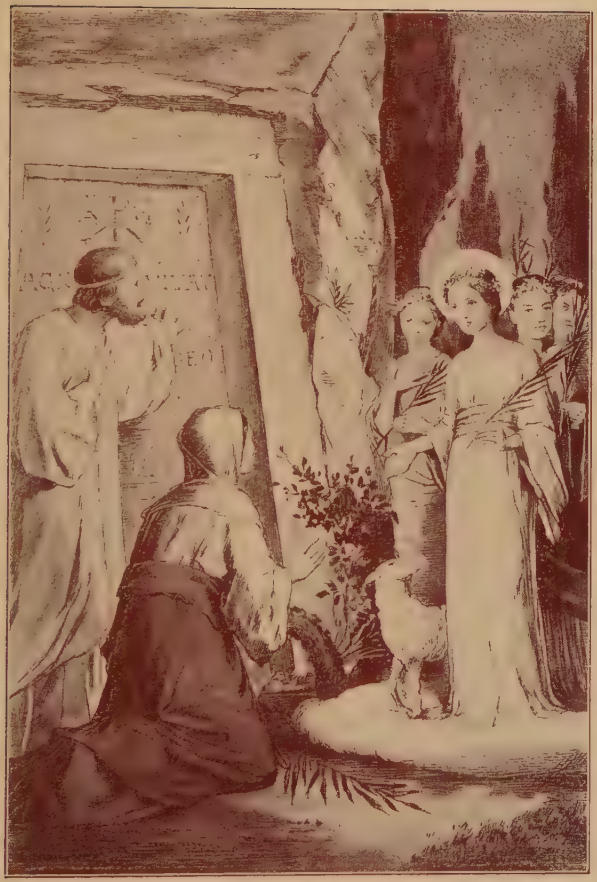
Then Agnes answered solemnly: "It is Christ."

At this confession the Roman felt a delight

which he concealed, for, as a Christian, Agnes was in his power. You must know, children, that at that time the followers of Christ were bitterly hated and cruelly persecuted in Rome. Symphronius, as tribune, could summon Agnes to be heard and condemned as he saw fit. But first he thought to try the effect of persuasion and flattery. Therefore he took her aside and spoke kindly to her. But Agnes acted as though she did not hear. Then the tribune tried threats. "If you do not deny Christ," he said, "I shall have you tortured and burned alive."

The lictors were ordered to drag Agnes before the idols, that she might strew an offering of incense on the glowing coals on their altar. As her hands were tied, she was unbound that she might do so, but at once she made the sign of the cross instead. With that act she publicly acknowledged the Christian faith.

Now the angry tribune planned to set snares for her virtue. But Agnes knew to whom to turn in her trouble and trials. "Jesus Christ," she said, "is not so indifferent to the purity of His brides that He will allow them to be robbed of their virtue." Her faith was beautifully rewarded. An angel of God protected her innocence. Dazzling light shone about the virgin, so



ST. AGNES

that all were affrighted. A youth who tried to approach her in an unbecoming way was struck dead by the angel. It was the son of Symphronius. Agnes knelt down and prayed for him, and he came back to life. He then acknowledged Christ, praised the miracle, and became a Christian himself.

When the servants of the pagan gods heard this, they were infuriated. They wrought up the people so that a mob gathered, crying: "Death to the sorceress! Down with her!"

Now the tribune would have liked to free the maiden who had given back life to his son, but he did not dare to do so, for the mob threatened to complain to Cæsar if he did not avenge their gods. In his cowardice he turned Agnes over to the tribune Aspasius and sadly withdrew.

Aspasius at once condemned Agnes to be burned at the stake. But behold! the flames did not hurt the pure bride of Christ. They parted, and burned the people standing to the right and to the left. And these clamored once more against the sorceress. Then the tribune ordered Agnes to be put into an iron cradle made red hot. But Agnes did not shrink. "Now I am becoming a child again," she said joyfully, "and heaven belongs to children." This time, too,

she remained unharmed. Then Aspasius, in a rage, ordered that she be put to death by the sword. Calmly and cheerfully she heard the order, and suffered herself to be led to the place of execution. Her tender youth, the innocence which threw a halo about her, moved many people to tears. Even the executioner trembled. "Do what it is your office to do," Agnes urged; "even now the heavenly Bridegroom is waiting for me. May this body, which has attracted eyes I do not wish to charm, perish!" Then she received the fatal blow. Her body was destroyed, but her pure soul rose to the longed-for union with the heavenly Bridegroom. It was in the year of Our Lord 304.

The parents buried their holy child on a small estate which they possessed near Rome. Many miracles glorified the tomb. Once when the parents were praying at the holy place in the silent night Agnes appeared to them in heavenly radiance. She carried a lighted lamp in her hand, and a lamb on her arm. Many radiant virgins surrounded her. The saint, however, said: "Do not weep nor mourn for me. Rejoice rather, for I am now united with Jesus in heaven, with Jesus whom I loved above all things on earth."

Behold, my dear children, what wonderful re-

ward is given to purity, for it is of surpassing merit in the eyes of God. God has commanded angels to watch over you, to help you keep this purity.

"Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God," Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount. Do you want to risk losing the joy of dwelling forever in the presence of God because of an act of impurity?

"Chastity makes angels," said St. Ambrose. The chaste are angels; who loses chastity is a devil.

ST. GERMAINE.

God's flowers may bloom anywhere. On a humble shepherd's field bloomed the holy Germaine. She was born in Pibrac, a village in southern France, not far from Toulouse, in the year 1579. Her parents, Laurence Cousin and Marie Laroche, were poor in earthly goods, but rich in piety and the fear of God. Germaine was the only child. She was so delicate when she was born that it was thought she would soon return to the good God. But her mother nursed her so carefully that her life was spared. As the child grew, the good mother added spiritual care to the care of the body. She taught her child to pray, and to love God above all things and keep His commandments. And what she taught in words she strengthened by her own example. Little Germaine remembered everything carefully, and it was her dearest delight to pray. The faults and habits that have to be punished so often in other children were never noticed in Germaine. She

showed no self-will nor impatience, untruthfulness, nor over-fondness of pleasure or fun. Her pleasure seemed to be to go to church and kneel for hours before the Blessed Sacrament.

Herself a child of poverty, Germaine loved the poor. She looked upon them as the sisters and brothers of the little Child Jesus in His poverty, and gave them the alms which the mother could spare out of their small means. Then Germaine began to ail. Painful sores covered her tender body. Most other children would have cried, and complained, and fretted. Germaine offered up her sufferings to the Saviour on the cross. But when Germaine was six years old the sores and sickness left her, and she grew and bloomed like a flower set in the sun and dew. All who saw her wondered at the heavenly sweetness which seemed to surround her presence. But this sweetness was only a reflection of her pure and holy soul. When she was seven years old, the priest of the village thought her worthy to receive her first holy communion. The child was most happy at this unusual privilege, but her mother became ill and Germaine had to nurse her. So the priest delayed giving her the Holy Sacrament.

Then the mother died and, instead of her kindness and piety as an example, Germaine now had

to suffer the tempers and punishments of a servant whom her father took into the house to do the household work. So patient was the child and so quietly she took the exactions of the servant woman, that at last the woman was moved to change her hard and cruel behavior.

But even then a new trial was coming to Germaine. Her father became very sick. She nursed him so patiently and faithfully that she herself became weak and sick. Her strength came back to her but slowly, and one hand remained lame for some time. Because her sick father could not earn any money he could not pay the servant either, so she left. Then Germaine had to care for him and do the housework as well. But after a while there was nothing left to cook, and so the half-lame child must needs go beg from door to door for a little food. And you may be sure that she got many an unpleasant word and many a scolding on the way, though her angelic patience never left her.

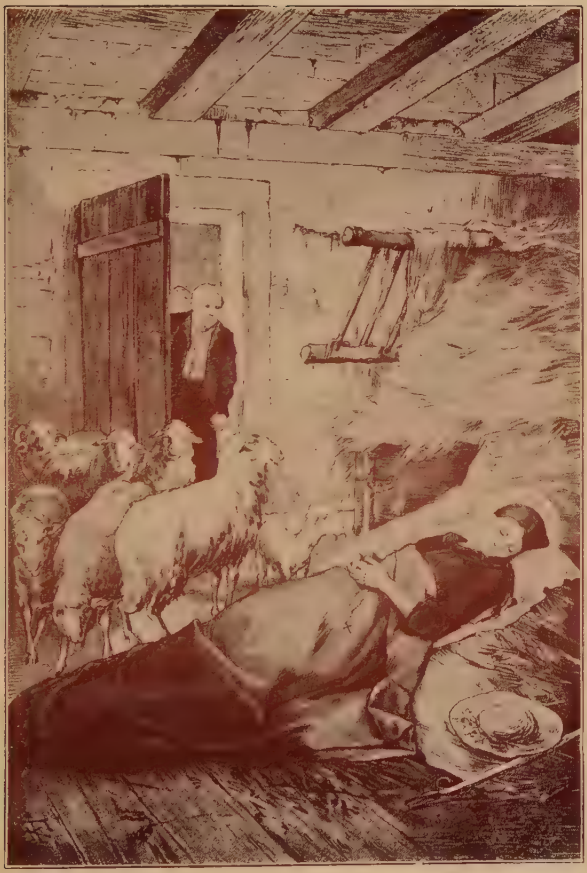
Then her father got better, and, to have a well-ordered home once more, he decided to marry again. But the person whom he married had deceived him as to her disposition. No sooner was she mistress in the house but she began to show her true self, which was cruel and coarse.

And now Germaine's lot became harder than ever. Task upon task was given her to do, more than was in her strength. For reward she was scolded, and half-starved, and even beaten. The new children in the family were so many more little torments to Germaine, for, encouraged by their mother, they treated her as their slave. But Germaine was ever-patient. Silently she bore her sufferings, out of love for the suffering Christ. Then one day the unfeeling woman said to Germaine: "After this you shall herd the sheep and sleep in the stable. Here into the house you shall not come any more."

With heavenly resignation Germaine obeyed this command also. But Our Lord consoled the deserted maid. He was with her when she herded the sheep and at night when she prayed in the stable. As Germaine liked to hear Mass every morning, she would stick her shepherd's crook into the ground and then, oh wonderful! the sheep would keep on feeding quietly around it and not one run away. Over the swollen creek Germaine could walk without sinking, without even wetting her feet. Celestial radiance often streamed about her in the stable, and angel voices sang so sweetly that the village people would stand outside and listen.

She divided her scanty food with a poor old woman. This her stepmother learned. "Ah," she thought, "Germaine is stealing food." Furious at this thought, she ran after the child, beat her, and took her basket away from her. And, behold! the few pieces of bread that Germaine had saved from her own allowance to give to the old woman had become changed into beautiful flowers. Then at last her inhuman stepmother was moved by this plain evidence of the hand of God in protecting Germaine, and mended her ways, so that Germaine was now treated with kindness. She was now twenty-two years old, but her sufferings, borne for the sake of Christ, had become so dear to her that she asked to be allowed to continue sleeping in the stable.

One night when she was thus sleeping an angel appeared to her with the welcome message that she would soon receive her heavenly reward. A holy joy filled the virgin at this. Eagerly she prepared herself for death. A sudden illness seized her; she received the sacraments with touching devotion and then asked of her parents: "Carry me once more to my sheep and leave me alone over night." It was done as she asked. When the parents went to the stable in the morning they saw the saint lying on the



ST. GERMAINE

straw as if asleep. Her face was pleasant, for her soul had gone to the Good Shepherd.

What is the virtue that particularly impresses us in St. Germaine, dear children? Christian patience, is it not? And how did she obtain the grace to be so patient under the greatest provocations and sufferings? Chiefly through the contemplation of the sufferings of Christ. She felt how much the Son of God had suffered and she thought that she, a sinful human being, should not rebel at affliction. And so she bore all things quietly and cheerfully. By her patience she won heaven. Shall we not try to do the same?

ST. CASIMIR.

At Cracow, in the year 1456, a son was born to the Polish king Casimir III. The child was given the name Casimir at Baptism. The pious mother, Elizabeth, together with learned and God-fearing instructors, watched over the childhood of the prince. He showed a mind most open to all teachings and advice. And, as a flower turns to the sun, so his heart and soul turned ever to God.

From his earliest childhood he delighted in prayer. He could not look upon a crucifix without having tears come into his eyes. He was especially devoted to the Blessed Virgin. To her care he commended the purity of his soul. And his observance of this virtue was angelic. Once when he heard a lewd word at a strange table he fainted in horror. In his tender youth he vowed himself to chastity, and this vow he kept faithfully until his holy death.

The splendor and festivities, amusements, and display of the royal court tempted neither the

boy nor the youth. He preferred to be with Jesus in prayer, in self-denial, in mortifications, in charity, and thus to serve Him. Under the costly dress that was deemed fitting for a prince he wore the hair shirt of the penitent. At night he scorned to rest on a soft bed, and slept instead on the hard floor. Early in the morning he arose and said his prayers. Then he hastened to Mass. If he found the church-door still locked, he honored at least the entrance of the house of God, by kissing the door. Often the sexton found him kneeling on the hard stones before the church-door. At Mass he was filled with such devotion that one felt as if looking at an angel. After the Holy Sacrifice he remained in the church so long in prayer and meditation that his royal parents would have to send messengers to call him to meals.

He saw the tempting food of the royal table without desire. Indeed he ate so little that he kept a continual fast. "The kingdom of God is not food and drink," he said. He guarded against loud talking and gossiping. If he had to speak he did so in a gentle voice and modestly. His most frequent topic was God and His works. No one ever heard a backbiting or unkind word from his lips.

Pride and haughtiness had no place in his soul. The poor and the suffering he looked upon as his brothers and permitted them to come into the court of the royal palace and gave them alms with his own hand. The courtiers shook their heads. "Such associations," they said, "are not becoming to a prince." Then Casimir answered, "I know no greater honor than to serve Jesus and His poor."

Grown to manhood, Casimir found more pleasure in visiting Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament than in dancing, playing, and hunting. He often arose in the middle of the night to go to the chapel and pray. In praise of Mary he composed a Latin song. This he sang every day on his knees.

He might have been king of Hungary, but he would have had to hold the crown against an enemy. So the prince answered: "I do not want a crown that is stained by the blood of my subjects." He looked rather upon the crown of thorns of the Saviour, than upon the golden crown of an earthly ruler.

His parents and friends thought that, like the other princes, he ought to take a wife. But Casimir refused. He wanted to live in virginity and die so. And this resolution he defended in a

severe sickness into which he fell when he was in his twenty-fifth year. Through the reception of the last sacraments and fervent prayer he prepared for the heavenly bridal. "I know no other refuge, no other life, but Christ," he said. "I desire to pass away and be united with Him, my Lord."

His strength failed quickly. In the early morning hour on the 4th of March, 1483, he gave up his pure soul, to receive its eternal crown from the King of kings.

Rich children who have in superfluity food, drink, beautiful clothes, and amusements, are in great danger of becoming idle, vain, proud, selfish, and thereby suffer a loss to their spiritual life. Therefore, Casimir, the son of a king, has become a model for all rich children, teaching them not to give their hearts to the passing pleasures of this world and thereby lose the eternal joys of heaven.

ST. ANNE AND THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

St. Anne, whose name means "grace," was born in Bethlehem. She belonged to the tribe of Judah and to the royal house of David. After Anne had passed her youth in spotless purity she was married to Joachim, a Galilean of Nazareth. Both were righteous before God and lived in His fear and in purity of heart according to His commandments. But one blessing was denied these good people. They had no child. This pained them very much, for childlessness was a shame in Israel. But instead of complaining, Joachim and Anne submitted humbly to the will of God. Their days were passed in labor, prayer, and good works. And in their prayers they naturally sent up many a petition for the child that was denied them, and at last vowed that if one were given them they would especially consecrate it to the service of the Lord. And then when Anne, who was becoming old, was one day walking in her garden, God sent an angel to her with the promise that she should

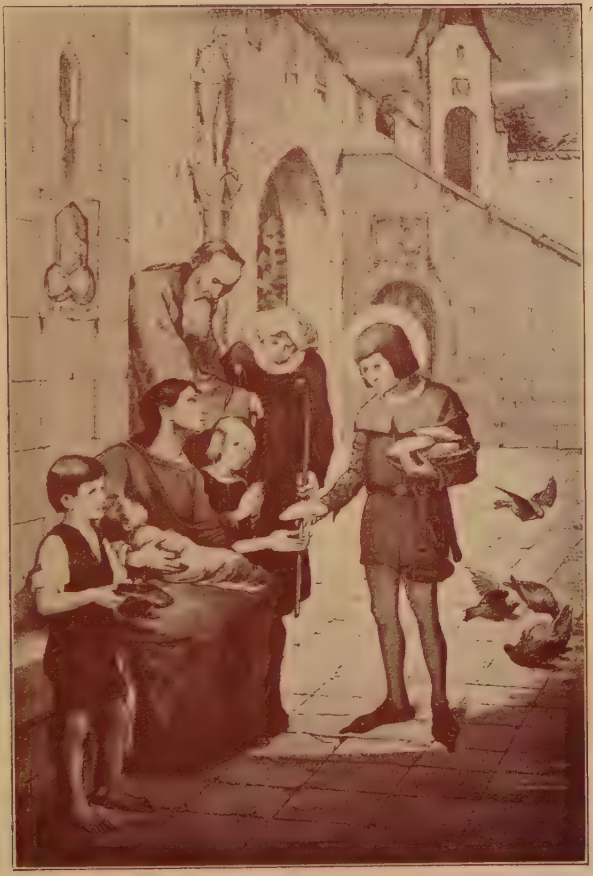
have a child who would be the admiration of all. And to Joachim, who was herding his sheep in the hills, an angel appeared, also with the same message. And the Lord kept His promise. Anne became the joyful mother of that Most Blessed Virgin whom we revere as the Immaculate Mother of the Saviour.

The child of grace was given the name Mary on the ninth day. A wonderfully lovely name, but also one having much meaning. It means mistress, sea, star of the sea. And we know how these three meanings come true in the Blessed Virgin. Mary is the Queen of Heaven; Mary is the Sea of Grace; Mary is the Star of the Sea to which all Catholics look up, like sailors on storm-tossed ships, for guidance through the storms of life to help them reach the eternal port of heaven.

Mary was not born in luxury. Her parents were humble people, although they had such noble ancestry. They lived a hidden and quiet life. Mary, the mystic rose, was destined to unfold her bloom on a bare branch, under the pressure of need. The cradle of the Queen of the angels was not ornamented with carved designs, nor covered with costly hangings, nor perfumed with sweet-smelling ointments, as were the cradles of the children of the Hebrew princes of that time. It was woven

out of pliant withes, and coarse linens enveloped the tender arms that were one day to carry the Saviour. The first smiles of Mary fell upon poor women of the people who bent over her cradle to admire Anne's late-come child. St. Anne thanked Our Lord for her daughter in a song of praise which tradition has preserved to us and which tells the delight of her mother-heart.

The love, the patience, and the industry with which Anne cared for her child are indescribable. She knew through the message of the angel that Mary was destined for high honors by God. This was enough inspiration for her to do all she could for her child. And in raising the child she had no trouble, for the understanding of Mary was far beyond her years, while a more than angelic innocence and purity seemed to speak out of everything she did. The graces which Anne received through her blessed child must have been unspeakably great. For if the house of Zachary and Elizabeth was blest by the mere visit of Mary, how much more blest must have been Anne, who was permitted to nurse Mary in her tender childhood for three years. Remembering her vow, Anne brought her daughter to the Temple in Jerusalem when she was barely three years old, so that she might be entirely given up to the



ST. CASIMIR

service of God. To be sure, the parting was sore for the loving parents, but for the sake of the Lord they made the sacrifice joyfully. At the golden portal of the Temple the venerable high priest received the beauteous little maid. Angels spread their wings over her and strewed flowers before her, singing heavenly songs the while, as St. Andrew of Crete and St. George of Nicomedia relate.

After Joachim and Anne had bowed down in the holy Temple on their faces in adoration of the true God, they returned to their homes, while Mary served the Lord with the other maidens of the Temple.

How long Anne lived after Mary was brought to the Temple, and if it was given her to see the Saviour, the divine Son of her blessed daughter, is not known. According to some historians she died a widow in the seventy-ninth year of her life.

St. Anne was the first to venerate Mary, with what fervor her holy life shows us. Follow, dear children, the example of St. Anne and venerate Mary, the Queen of Heaven, the Sea of Grace, the Star of the Ocean, the virgin Mother of Christ. Extraordinary graces were given to St. Anne. See, for you, too, Mary will obtain graces if you petition her

every day, every hour. Who prays to the purest of Virgins will be protected from sins to which thousands succumb. Him, however, who has the misfortune to fall into sin, Mary will help to obtain the grace of repentance. Our holy Mother the Church recommends, as the foremost means of grace, the Angelus, the litany of Loretto, and the Rosary. The Blessed Virgin herself made known to St. Gertrude that the Angelus was dearest to her. Christendom unites in the veneration of the Blessed Virgin through the litany of Loretto, imploring her intercession by a number of tender and poetical names. The Rosary is the most fruitful of the prayers. Use these three means of grace every day, dear children, and you will find in Mary a mother and a refuge in life and in death.

ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY.

The dear St. Elizabeth, our St. Elizabeth, as the German people like to call her, was the daughter of King Andrew II. of Hungary, and was born in the year 1207. The little princess was carried to her Baptism followed by a grand procession. She was most carefully trained and taught, and from her earliest childhood she loved God and the poor.

When she was barely four years old she was taken away from her parents to live among strangers. You will ask why. My dear children, in those days it was the custom to promise children in marriage at their birth or soon after. So Elizabeth was promised to Louis, the son of the landgrave of Thuringia, in Germany. With an escort of many nobles, of horsemen, and of servants, Elizabeth was taken to the Wartburg near Eisenach. Here Elizabeth and Louis were solemnly betrothed, and were then raised together.

The noisy life at the castle of the landgrave did not prevent Elizabeth from giving up her childish heart to Our Lord, the Blessed Virgin, and the beloved St. John. Prayer and self-denial were her constant occupations. Even in her play she kept God in mind, and the least shadow of impurity was shunned by her. She had no mind for pride of dress and display. Once on the feast of the Assumption, she was dressed in silk and crowned with a little golden crown by the Countess Sophia, who was to be her mother-in-law, and was then taken to the church at Eisenach. She knelt down before a picture of the crucified Saviour, and after a little she took the golden crown from her head and wept to think that she, a poor creature, should have appeared before our thorn-crowned Redeemer in such costly attire.

In her childhood Elizabeth took particular delight in temporal and spiritual works of mercy. She always gave her pin-money to the poor, with the hope that they would say a Hail Mary for her. She gathered up the food left over from meals and gave it to the hungry. Once she went to a cemetery with her playmates. There she said to them: "The people who are buried here were once living, as we are. Now they are dead, as we will some day be. Therefore we should love God. And

now please say after me: Christ, through Thy bitter death and through Thy dear Mother Mary, deliver the souls from their sufferings in purgatory, and give us who are living Thy grace, that we may attain to the eternal joy of heaven."

As long as the landgrave lived, things were pleasant for Elizabeth. After his death his widow Sophia and her daughter Agnes, who were both worldly minded and lax in religious matters, made it very hard for Elizabeth. Because she liked to serve the poor, these ladies called her a servant and not a princess. Even the nobility made fun of her. She was like a lamb among wolves. They even tried to turn Louis, her promised husband, against her. They told him to send her to a convent. But in vain, for Louis valued her angelic patience and her piety.

In her fifteenth year she was married. Elizabeth was very happy with her young husband, and he, being a most God-fearing man, allowed her to go on with her pious practices. She visited the sick, helped the needy, and would spin and weave clothing for the poor with her own hands. As an angel of mercy she appeared in the humble homes which she visited. The many roses blooming on the Wartburg keep the memory of the lovely miracle of roses fresh to this day. Once when Eliza-

beth had a basket of food for the poor under her cloak, her husband stopped her and asked what she had there. Blushing to tell her own charity, she answered, "Roses to weave a wreath for myself." He asked to see them, and when he turned back her cloak the basket was full of roses.

A famine which desolated Thuringia in 1225 and caused great misery gave Elizabeth opportunity to increase her charity. She built two hospitals and fed nine hundred poor every day. At that time there were many lepers. Every one shrank in disgust from these poor wretches, but not Elizabeth. She loved them for Christ's sake. With her own hands she bathed them, and combed their hair, sat with them, and cheered and encouraged them to trust and hope in God.

After Elizabeth had had six years of happiness, the Lord put a heavy trial upon her. Her beloved husband died in a crusade in which he had joined with other Christian princes for the rescue of the Holy Land. His brother Henry usurped his place and turned Elizabeth with her four young children out of the Wartburg. It was in the middle of winter, and the outcast princess was not permitted to take a thing with her. The daughter of a king was poorer than the poorest beggar, for the new lord of the land had even

forbidden his subjects to give her and her hungry and freezing children shelter and food. At last an innkeeper near Eisenach gave the wanderers leave to sleep in his stable. And here the princess and her children were glad to take refuge. "For shame," you think, my dear children. But not so Elizabeth. When the midnight bell of the Franciscan Church called the brothers to matins the saint went to the church and asked the brothers to sing the Te Deum in thanksgiving that she was vouchsafed to find shelter in a stable, even as Mary had been in Bethlehem.

Elizabeth went from Eisenach to Bamberg, where her uncle took her under his protection. He was the Bishop of Bamberg, and succeeded in persuading her brother-in-law to give back the city of Marburg and its revenues to Elizabeth. Elizabeth forgave her brother-in-law and never spoke a word of blame against him, but she did not want to know anything more of the world. She chose a hut outside of Marburg for her dwelling and took the habit of the Third Order of St. Francis on Good Friday of the year 1229. Her beloved children she gave up for the sake of Christ after having arranged for their right education and training, and she herself lived only for prayer, work, and the care of the sick. She

gave all her income to the poor, and lived only on bread and meat cooked in water.

On the 19th of November, 1231, her pure soul, ornamented by so many merits and virtues, passed back to its Maker. She was buried in Marburg, where a beautiful church has been built in her honor.

Be charitable, is the lesson of St. Elizabeth's life. And indeed it is a most important lesson. Great blessings, temporal and spiritual, especially the grace of obtaining eternal life, are promised those who give out of Christian charity, and particularly those who do the temporal acts of mercy. Who gives to the poor will have no need, but he who despises the prayer of the needy, will himself suffer poverty. And St. Paul entreats us not to forget to be charitable, for by such things God is reconciled.

Do not say, dear children, you have nothing to give. Your bread and butter, or your apple, can be divided with a poor child. The pennies which you keep for candy and sweets may sometimes be saved to give in charity. You can wait on the sick, or give to some one thirsty and tired a glass of water. Even the drink of water given in the name of Jesus will not miss its reward.

What we do for the least of our fellow beings,

ST. ANNE AND THE BLESSED VIRGIN

if we do it for the love of God, is as though we had done it to Christ Himself. Once St. Elizabeth was asked to attend a banquet which her husband was giving in honor of some of the highest nobles in the land, and he asked that she wear her finest robes for this reason. On the way to the banquet St. Elizabeth was stopped by a beggar who was almost naked, and who did not cease from begging for clothing. She took off her cloak and gave it to him. Before she entered the banquet-hall an unknown youth stepped up to her and handed back her cloak. Who was this youth? Perhaps an angel; perhaps even Our Lord Himself. Who knows?

THE BLESSED HERMANN JOSEPH.

HERMANN was the son of poor but God-fearing parents, who lived in Cologne on the Rhine. He must have been born about the year 1200. In the humble living-room of his parents' house there was a little house-altar with a statue of the Blessed Virgin. Here his mother would often kneel, her eyes raised to the image of the Virgin. Before Hermann understood why she did this, he imitated her example and knelt down beside her, his childish eyes fixed upon the statue. The longer he looked at it, the more lovely the features of Mary became to him. Thus the picture of Mary and Jesus became enshrined in his heart, and in the humble room Hermann was joyous and happy because Mary and Jesus were always with him.

After Hermann grew a little older his mother told him of Jesus and Mary and then he wanted to be taken to church. His mother took him to the Church of Our Lady. Here he would kneel before the statue of the Blessed Virgin like a little

angel, and, as a child speaks with his mother, so Hermann told to Mary every day all his little joys and sorrows.

As he showed great readiness in studying, his parents made up their minds to let him go to school. This did not cost much at that time, as the monks took the children of the poor free of cost. Hermann was sent to the Premonstratensian monks. He studied well, but never neglected his dear Mother in heaven. When the other boys were playing at recess, he would slip into the church near-by and spend his free time before the altar of Mary. Kneeling on the steps he would talk in his accustomed way with the Blessed Mother and her divine Child. Once he came into the church with an apple in his hand and offered it to the Child Jesus. "See, Mother," he said, "what a beautiful apple I have brought for Jesus." And the story is that Our Lady took the apple out of the hand of the trustful child.

As the child of poor people, Hermann sometimes had but little to eat. In the morning he often got nothing but a piece of black bread. Then, too, his clothing was thin and barely kept him from the cold. What did he do? He consoled himself by thinking of the poverty of the Christ-Child and His Blessed Mother in the stable

at Bethlehem. And before the image he told his heavenly Mother of his hunger and his cold, saying, "O Mother, help me."

And she did. One winter day when he was praying at her altar she said to him: "Hermann, why are you barefoot in this cold weather?" "Because I have no shoes," the boy answered. "Then go to that rock," Mary said to him; "under it you will find money. Take it and buy shoes with it."

Hermann obeyed and found the money. Then Mary promised him if he would look under the rock every time he was in need he would always find money enough there to get what he needed most. And so it was. When it became known later where the poor boy got money the other boys began to go to church, too, and to pray. But they had not Hermann's innocence and faith, and Mary worked no miracle for them.

When Hermann was twelve years old he was sent to the monastery at Steinfeld. Here he served for some time as sacristan, until the monks sent him to Frisia to be prepared for Holy Orders. In the novitiate Hermann was a model of piety and humility, of industry and obedience for all his fellow students. On account of his spotless purity and his fervent devotion to Mary, his com-

panions nicknamed him "Joseph." In his humbleness Joseph protested against this name, but in vain. Then Mary made known to him in a vision that he should let himself be called Joseph.

After returning to Steinfeld, Hermann Joseph received the habit and took the vows of the Order. At first the severest tasks were given him to do, such as caring for the refectory, and so on. When he grieved because so little time was left him for prayer and meditation, the Blessed Virgin appeared to him again, telling him that obedience was the most pleasing service that can be rendered to her divine Son and to her. Thereupon Hermann waited upon his brothers with delight, though he himself ate little but bread and water. He only slept a few hours, and that on the hard floor. He wore the shabbiest habit and looked upon himself as the least of all in the monastery.

Soon after this Hermann Joseph was appointed sacristan, and this service allowed him to spend much time before the altar of Mary.

In Lent of the year 1236 his superiors sent him to preach at the Convent of Hoven. When, sick and weak, he entered the convent church he drew the outline of a grave on the floor with his staff and said, "Here you will bury me." Soon after that he fell into a fever, the pains of which he

bore patiently, saying: "As my Jesus wills." On the 7th of April, 1236, he entered into the glory of Jesus and Mary, to behold it for all eternity. He was buried on the spot he had pointed out.

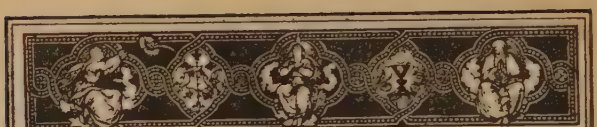
All poor children can often have Jesus and Mary with them and may be happy in their company, as was Hermann Joseph. All poor children may speak as trustingly to them as he did. Mary is the loving and helpful Mother of all who are in sorrow and tribulations. But we must pray to her fervently and hopefully.

Think of another thing, children: When Hermann Joseph took the vows of his Order he chose to be forever poor. This is particularly pleasing to God and is rewarded with eternal life by Him. For the Saviour says: "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me. Every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for My name's sake shall receive an hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting."

Christ Himself was one of the poor of earth, from His birth to His death on the cross. He humbled Himself and took the form of a servant

among men that He might help us the more. Often He had not where to rest His head. For He said of Himself to the man who came to follow Him: "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head."

He who has the riches and treasures of this world takes care of them first; but he who has nothing can the better look after his soul. The heavier his pack, the harder it is for the traveller to go on; so earthly possessions are a drag on the way to heaven.



ST. ROSE OF LIMA.

The first saint which the new world gave to the Church came from the ancient Land of the Sun, Peru. It was St. Rose. She belonged to a noble Spanish family and was born in Lima in the year 1586. She received the name Isabella, which was changed to Rose after her mother beheld a wonderful rose floating over the cradle of the sleeping child.

Even in her childhood Rose practised self-abnegation and self-denial. As a tiny child she repressed her tears and moans when her thumb had to be cut off on account of an injury. With the same patience she submitted to incisions made necessary by a disease of the ear. She always thought of our suffering Saviour, who submitted to far greater pains for our sakes. She fasted three times in the week, taking nothing but water and bread, and allowed herself little more than vegetables for other days. She took but little sleep, and that on a hard bed.

ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY

Rose was very beautiful in features and in form. But she looked upon beauty as a dangerous gift, as it easily leads to vanity, and avoided everything that might attract notice. She even destroyed the delicate color of her skin by rubbing it with Cayenne pepper. Her beautiful hair she cut off. When misfortune suddenly befell her parents her devotion to them led her to try to think of means to help out. She planted her garden with flowers, made bouquets, and sent a servant out to sell them on the market-place. The proceeds she gave to her mother. A clergyman asked her what she could do with her poor little flower trade. She answered: "The profit is not great, it is true, but the Saviour knows how to increase it."

We have seen that Rose permitted no pride to come in her mind. Therefore she did not hesitate to take service as a maid in the household of a man named Gonsalvus. She worked busily at her tasks, day and night, without, however, interrupting her communion with God. The other servants had no understanding for this holy life, and this caused them to do many unkind things to Rosa. But she bore it all patiently, for again she remembered the persecutions to which our dear Lord was subjected.

An offer of marriage that would give her high

position and wealth was made to her. But Rose had early vowed her heart to the heavenly Bridegroom and she refused to comply with the worldly wishes of her parents. The praise of her beauty did not touch her, any more than the reproaches for her behavior could move her. At last she was left to go her way in peace.

In order to be able to fulfil her vow of virginity the better, Rose joined the Third Order of St. Dominic, but remained the while with her parents. In a corner of the garden she built herself a cell out of boards and ornamented it with a crucifix and pictures of the saints. Here she spent most of her time, alternating prayer and meditation with work. She took particular delight in working for the decoration of churches and altars. The poor and sick of the city she visited diligently, but she scorned to make worldly calls merely for social pleasure. "Even," she said, "if the conversation is of God when visiting, I would yet rather speak to Him, than of Him." The most poignant works of penance were her delight. On her head she wore a wreath of flowers with thorns turned inward to be like the thorn-crowned Saviour. If she spoke of God, she was like one inspired. Her face shone with the ardor of the holy love with which her spirit glowed. Extraordinary graces were

vouchsafed her by God, but also great sufferings of body and of soul as well. But Rose was steadfast, and did not cease to pray and to do works of charity and of penance. In her great love for prayer she even asked of the unreasoning creatures that they should praise God. This she did particularly in the case of a little bird, which came every evening during Lent and perched itself on the branch of a tree near Rose's cell. Then the saint sang the following song to it:

"Come, thou little Philomel,
Raise thy voice unto the sky;
Let thy song His praises swell
Whom the angels sing on high.

"Thy Creator's praise from thee,
And my Saviour's praise from me;
Deep the joy that wings our song
Unto where it doth belong.

"Give thy music as thy part;
I to Him will give my heart.
Joining thus our gifts in turn,
Growing fervor may we learn."

When Rose commenced to sing, the bird began also with a soft and mellow tone and trilled and piped louder and louder and more clearly its song of jubilee, until it ended. Then Rose began to sing again, and so they each took their turn for hours in singing the glory of Our Lord.

After a long and painful illness the saint en-

tered into the glory of her heavenly Bridegroom on August 24, 1617. She was then thirty-one years old. Even her dead body still showed a lovely sweetness.

The lesson that the life of St. Rose teaches, my dear children, is: no pride, no vanity. St. Rose had neither pride of the mind nor of the body. She did not think she was better nor more virtuous than others; she was not vain of her physical beauty; when her parents had become poor she did not hesitate to serve as a maid for their sake. And because she was not proud, she was active in visiting the poor and the sick of the city. He who is proud does not do that, for with pride goes hardness of heart, and a haughtiness towards our fellow beings. He who is proud puts himself on the altar of his adoration, instead of God, and makes a god of himself. He makes life unbearable for himself and for others, and at last comes to a fall. And, indeed, there is nothing more silly in a human being than pride. Everything that we have we owe to God only and we keep it only as long as God wills. How quickly beauty fades, how uncertain are riches, how dangerous are even genius and skill without humility and grace!

Among the seven deadly sins, pride is first. It is the most abhorred by God. The Holy Scrip-

tures tell us that God resists the proud. On account of pride Lucifer was cast out of heaven. Pride drove our first parents out of paradise and plunged the whole race in the misery of sin. Pride confused the tongues of the workers on the Tower of Babel. Pride brought the plague down on the legions of David. Pride degraded Nabuchodonosor to the level of the beast, and it was pride that kept the Pharisee from being justified. Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

ST. ALOYSIUS OF GONZAGA.

The angelic St. Aloysius was the son of the margrave Ferdinand de Gonzaga and was born at Castle Castiglione in the year 1568.

By his pious mother, whose name was Martha, the germs of the fear of God and of the love of prayer were implanted in his mind in his earliest years. The first prayer taught the child was the Ave Maria, and he was so fond of it that he often repeated it in childish playfulness. Once, being asked if he really loved Mary so fervently, he answered, with shining eyes, "Of course; is she not my Mother?"

As the son of noble parents, Aloysius had at his command the choicest food and drink and the costliest clothing. But he found no pleasure in these things. His delight was in communion with God. When he was only five years old he was sometimes found on his knees in a corner saying his prayers. To this custom of devout and persistent prayer, Aloysius remained faithful to his

death, finding always an ever-increasing delight in speaking to Our Lord.

His father intended his son for the army. For this reason he took him into camp when the boy was seven years old. Here Aloysius picked up some unbecoming words by hearing the soldiers talk. His tutor called his attention to them and explained that they were wicked. At once he repented having said them and wept to think he had offended God. But the grief at having offended God never left him, nor did his penance cease during life.

Though he was a model of piety, even in his tenderest childhood, he was not content with that. In his seventh year, the year of his conversion, as he called it, he laid down for himself a more severe rule of life. To live only for God and in this way to become holy was the resolve he made.

At twelve years Aloysius received his first holy communion from the hand of St. Charles Borromeo. After that he received holy communion every week with an angelic devotion. Three days of the week he spent in preparation and three more in thanksgiving. He visited Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament as often as he could and adored Him with the most fervent prayer.

The love of self-abnegation was so great in Aloysius that it is hard to understand how his tender body could hold out under such rigid works of penance. He is the shining example of innocence, the innocent penitent.

One day Aloysius was at prayer in a church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. Full of fervent desire to offer up to her something which might be most acceptable, he took the vow of chastity before her image. This vow he kept most sacredly. He guarded his eyes and all his senses; he avoided every possible occasion of sin and spent his time in prayer, labor, and pious exercises. In return, God gave him the grace of the greatest purity. Those who knew the youth assure us that the saint never had a single impure desire in his whole life and never violated his vow even in thought.

His father, Count Ferdinand, had his mind fixed upon a worldly career for his son and sent him to Florence, and later to the Spanish court, which was at that time the most magnificent in Europe. Amid the brilliant festivities and the distractions of the court, Aloysius remained faithful to his severe rule of life. Compared to the heavenly and eternal joys, the pride and display of earth seemed vain and empty to him. The desire to join some

Order and live a religious life altogether became stronger and stronger, and finally he chose the Order of St. Ignatius, the Society of Jesus.

However, when Aloysius revealed his plan to his father he became very angry. Everything that he could do to divert his son from his "whim" was tried. He even threatened him with physical punishment. But Aloysius remained steadfast, telling his father that he must prefer obedience to God to the wishes of his father. Then Aloysius went to his room and knelt down and prayed and scourged himself. His father overheard him, and his heart was so touched that he gave his consent. Aloysius joyfully signed the deed by which he resigned his portion of his paternal inheritance to his brother.

In the year 1585 he entered the Jesuit novitiate in Rome. Here he worked unremittingly and perseveringly for greater perfection. It gave him especial pleasure to perform the services of the humblest servant, to beg in the streets of the Eternal City, and to nurse the sick in the hospitals. In 1590 an epidemic sickness broke out in Rome. Aloysius did not cease to entreat his superiors to let him devote himself to the care of the sick. In his self-sacrificing fervor he himself contracted a slow fever and died on the night of June

20th to 21st, 1591, at the age of twenty-three. His last words were: "We go; we go with joy into heaven; into heaven; Jesus! Mary!"

St. Aloysius is to you, dear children, a model of piety and innocence. Honor this angelic saint. Particularly if you are students, for St. Aloysius is the patron and example of students.

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES.

In the family castle of the Count Sales in Savoy in 1567 there was great joy, for an heir had been born to the noble parents. Under the guidance of his pious mother the boy began to lead a holy life even in his childhood. This saintliness seemed to glorify his whole being; his face was angelic in its beauty, his form was graceful, and his manner most winning. His father directed the mind of his little son towards all that was beautiful, noble, and great; but with the tenderest love he united an unrelenting discipline towards any faults in his son.

One time Francis had taken a bright-colored silk girdle out of the jacket of a workingman who was employed in the castle. He acknowledged the act in all humility and threw himself on his knees before his father, begging his forgiveness. Those who were looking on were moved to tears and interceded for the boy. His father, however, completed the boy's punishment with

the switch. And Francis patiently received the whipping.

When the boy was seven years old he was sent to the school at Annecy to be grounded in the beginning of learning. He soon excelled all his fellow pupils, not only in industry and attainments, but also in obedience, humility, and truthfulness. Lie? Never. Better endure punishments than escape them by an untruth. The poor, whom his mother had taught him to love as his brethren, he never forgot. Often he denied himself food, so as to be able to give it to the needy and hungry.

From Annecy, Francis was sent to Paris by his father and placed in the care of the Jesuits to be educated by them. Here, too, he distinguished himself by his scholarship, without, however, lessening the saintliness of his life. He wore a penitential garment next to his body, and before the image of the Blessed Virgin he took the vow of eternal virginity. Through the intercession of Mary he was freed, as if by a miracle, from the most terrible temptations during despondency and despair which haunted him day and night and at one time nearly brought him to his death. In gratitude Francis vowed to recite the Rosary every day.

After six years of study in Paris, Francis entered the University of Padua in Italy to take up law. He took the degree of doctor of law, both of civil and of canon law. He preserved his innocence amidst the temptations set for him by his fellow students, by living quietly and retiringly, by prayer and self-denial. A journey to Rome and a pilgrimage to Loretto closed his stay in Italy. At Loretto he consecrated his life once more to the Blessed Virgin and her Son.

On returning to the castle of his parents, Francis was told by his father that he intended that he should enter into the service of the State. But Francis begged so earnestly and so tenderly that his father was moved and consented, saying to his son: "Be happy and may others through you find happiness also."

After his ordination Francis was appointed Archdeacon of the Cathedral at Geneva. Here, as well as at Chablais, where he was called by the Duke of Savoy, he labored for the salvation of souls. Thousands of the followers of Calvin were won from their heresies by him. This success he owed to his extraordinary eloquence, but even more to his wonderful gentleness, which appealed even to the hearts of his enemies and antagonists.

After the death of the Bishop of Geneva, Fran-

cis was elevated to the episcopal dignity by Pope Clement VIII. But even in this high office Francis de Sales remained the simple, soul-loving priest, who had only love and gentleness even for those who offended and traduced him.

Once the saint was grossly insulted by a vulgar person. He remained calm and did not answer a word. When he was asked why he did not reprove the man, as he could have done if he wished, he said: "Long since I promised our dear Lord never to speak a single word in anger; for, no matter how little one may say, words may escape us that fill our hearts with bitterness for the day. But if we say nothing but a silent Hail Mary for patience the storm passes by and we are pleasant, and calm, and at peace afterwards."

The holy Bishop answered a friend who blamed him for being too mild and easy in his dealings with his enemies, by saying: "If there were something higher and greater than meekness Jesus would have taught us; but He said, 'Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart.'"

The patience and meekness of St. Francis are the more admirable because he was by nature quick-tempered and impatient.

Through the grace of God he conquered his spirit, and he who conquers his spirit is greater

than he who takes a city. He gave his private as well as his episcopal income almost entirely to the poor. He even gave his bed-linen and the clothes he wore. As the childlike servant of Mary he founded the Order of the Visitation, with the help of St. Jeanne Francis de Chantal. During his apostolic labors he wrote many devout books, the most renowned being *Philothea*.

The holy Bishop and teacher died in Lyon, while travelling, on December 28, 1622, in the fifty-fifth year of his age.

"No anger" is the lesson which St. Francis de Sales teaches us, dear children. Those who do not get angry, do not quarrel and fight, but are quiet and silent, give in and bear with others. They are liked by all here in this world and will have a peaceful and pleasant life, as Our Lord promised—"Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land."

Anger and wrath include the will to do evil and lead to acts of violence. Man is no longer his own master if he has given way to rage and anger in his heart. The Apostle tells us that he who hates his brother is a murderer. Our Lord has shown us the whole wickedness of the curses and imprecations, into which it is so easy to break when angry. He says: "But I say to you that

whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council. And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." In this way Jesus shows us how deserving of punishment are the sins against Christian charity.

BLESSED HERMANN JOSEPH

ST. JANE FRANCES DE CHANTAL.

St. Jane de Chantal was born in the year 1572 in Dijon in France. Her parents were wealthy and belonged to the nobility. Her father, Benignus de Fremiot, was the chief magistrate of the court of justice of Burgundy, and he was known and esteemed as a pious and modest man. Her mother was beloved as a benefactress of the poor. The new-born daughter was christened Jane, or rather Jeanne, which is more nearly translated Joan or Johanna, in honor of St. John the Almoner, because the Baptism took place on his day. Later, at Confirmation, Jane was given the name Frances also. When Jane was only eighteen months old her mother died. After that her training was received from her father, who gave her the tenderest care and imbued her also with a certain masculine seriousness and earnestness that enabled her in later life to do so much and such great and hard things for God, as wife, as widow, and as nun.

Even as a child of five, Jane was filled with the conviction of the truth of the Catholic religion. She heard a nobleman who was a heretic talking with her father and disputing the real presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. She said to the nobleman: "Sir, you must believe that Jesus is present in the Blessed Sacrament, for He has told us so Himself. If you do not believe so, you stamp the Saviour as a liar." The nobleman was astonished at these words and asked a number of questions. She answered so pointedly and well that those present wondered at her knowledge of the truths of the faith.

Jane was also distinguished by a deep love for the poor. If she met a beggar, tears came into her eyes, for she thought of the Saviour who was poor, too, and had not even a stone on which to rest His head.

Because she lost her mother so early, Jane commended herself to the care of the Mother of the Lord and called herself a "child of Mary." Whatever she did, in every trouble and trial, she thereafter went to the Blessed Virgin and humbly asked her help and guidance.

When she was fifteen years old Jane accompanied her married sister on a visit to her home. In the neighborhood of her sister's estates the

heretics had given vent to their iconoclastic frenzy and the Catholic churches were defaced, the images, crucifixes, and relics destroyed. This grieved Jane so much that she covered her face with a veil, that the people might not see her tears and think she wept for other reasons. Her sister gave her a companion and instructress, who tried to win Jane from her pious ways to more worldly customs. But the Blessed Virgin protected her child, and after a time the companion was dismissed as unworthy of caring for Jane.

After staying with her sister for five years, Jane was called home by her father. She was now twenty years old, and in compliance with her father's wishes she married a French nobleman, Baron de Chantal. In her husband's castle Jane was the model wife and mistress of the home. She raised her children with the fervor and earnestness of a saint. She avoided costly clothing and useless visiting. She encouraged her servants to piety and faithful service. To the poor she gave alms every day; sometimes indeed the same beggars were helped two or three times a day. "For," she said, "am I not a daily beggar myself at the gates of the divine mercy? I would not that my own prayer be refused if I come a second or a third time."

After living happily with him for eight years, her good husband was killed in a hunting accident. Resigned to the will of God, Jane patiently submitted to this heavy trial, and made up her mind to devote herself entirely to the service of God for the rest of her life. She gave up all display, lived on simple food and used her costly clothes for pious purposes. Prayer, the reading of devout books, and work with her hands filled the hours which she could spare from the training of her children. She took the vow of chastity and became a real mother to the poor and to those in trouble. Her particular delight was to nurse those sick of repulsive diseases.

On the advice of her spiritual director, St. Francis de Sales, she decided to renounce the world entirely, to leave her dear father and her beloved children for the love of God, and to enter the Order of the Visitation, which she founded with the help of St. Francis. The special object of this Order was to be the furtherance of meekness, humility, obedience, and the denial of the senses. Here Jane became the inspiring example of her spiritual daughters.

But the saint had to endure many more trials in her life: the death of St. Francis, deaths in her family, and struggles with herself. But she took

all humbly from the hand of God. She denied her judgment, her will, her desires in order to become more like Christ. In the seventieth year of her life, on December 13, 1641, death united her with her divine Master.

"Every one that exalteth himself, shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted." St. Jane Frances de Chantal was exalted, because she was a model of humility. Follow her example, dear children, that you, too, may earn her reward. Do not put yourself ahead of others, but give to others the first place. Be not dissatisfied with your lot, but recognize that God has given you more graces than you deserve. Be not forward, bold, overfond of praise, quarrelsome, envious. Be generous and kind in your opinions and do not condemn anybody, but be the more strict with yourselves.

Humility is among the greatest virtues. Indeed, it might be said that humility is the best of all virtue. If a virtuous person is not humble, it may be that he is only virtuous because of self-love and ambition; his virtue is not pure gold, but only gilded brass. "He who tries to acquire virtues and has no humility, is like one carrying sand against the wind," says St. Gregory the Great. The deeper the foundation of a house is laid, the

firmer the building will stand. And in the same way virtues stand safest upon the deepest humility. "Humility has always been the foundation of a holy life," says St. Cyprian, "and even in heaven pride could not hold its own."

Christ chose to be born in a stable in poverty and lowliness; may you, too, love lowliness and humility.

ST. BENEDICT JOSEPH LABRE.

St. Benedict Joseph Labre was born in Amettes in France in the year 1748, and was the son of a well-to-do merchant. The child's parents were very pious and began early to train him in the fear of God and the love of the Blessed Virgin. His young heart took up their teaching like a flower-bed does the dew of heaven, and during his whole life Benedict Joseph remained a true follower of Christ and a fervent servant of Mary.

He was sent to school when he was only five years old. Here his diligence, patience, modesty, and humility won the admiration of his teachers. But the most striking thing about the boy was his earnestness. He spoke little, and when he had to speak he did so as briefly as possible, using but few words, but these were so sensible and to the point that a clever man could not have spoken better. Benedict Joseph showed no liking for the rough play so common with boys. When the

other boys were screaming and teasing he went quietly home. At home he was satisfied with the simplest food, leaving the delicacies rather for the servants and for the sick. Even the soft little bed his mother gave him to sleep in he did not use, preferring to sleep on the hard floor. It was never necessary to urge him to go to church, and to serve at Mass or vespers was his special delight. When he was only five years old he went to confession, and at twelve he received the first holy communion with great fervor and was also confirmed.

His parents decided to let their gifted and earnest son study for a profession. For this purpose he was sent to his uncle, who was a priest. But there was no profession which appealed to the young man. He preferred the reading of devout books to any worldly studies, and wonderful strength seemed to come to him from these readings. Thinking over and over on the choice of a vocation, he decided to serve God as a Trappist. He told his desire to his uncle, the priest, but the uncle thought that Benedict was too young to know his mind, being only sixteen years old. It was only after the death of this uncle that Benedict was permitted to follow the desire of his heart and enter the Trappist monastery. But his

health was so delicate that he could not long remain under the severe rule of the Trappists.

But the pious youth was not to be discouraged. "If I cannot serve God in the monastery," he thought, "I will serve Him in the world." After he had prayed humbly for guidance and had consulted with his confessor, he entered upon a new and, since the days of St. Alexius the Roman, unheard-of manner of living. He left his father and mother and everything dear to him in this world, to journey as a poor pilgrim from one shrine of grace to another. He made all his pilgrimages on foot, in old clothes which he only changed when they were no more to be worn. He took no food with him, but depended altogether upon Providence. He usually slept on the bare earth or on the step of a church. He often took the most lonesome and hardest roads from one place to another, so as to have more time for prayer and meditation. Wherever he could he did works of mercy both temporal and spiritual. If kindly people asked him to eat with them, he humbly refused, taking only what was left over and cast aside by others. Ridicule and derision and insults he accepted cheerfully.

Every year he journeyed to Loretto to venerate the Mother of God. He paused at the grave of

St. Romualdus at Fabriano in Italy, at that of St. Nicholas at Bari, at all the holy places in Rome, at the grave of St. Januarius in Naples and at that of St. Francis at Assisi. He also visited Maria Einsiedeln in Switzerland and all the famous shrines in Germany and France. And everywhere he left the example of the deepest piety and the most complete self-denial. He visited the churches in which the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, and the people came to call him "the beggar of the Forty Hours' Devotion."

In 1783 the saint was again in Rome. Half sick and suffering, he dragged himself to his beloved Church of Maria dei Monti. He knelt down in his accustomed place and remained in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament until evening. When he arose to leave the church he fell down fainting and was carried into a neighboring house. Here he died after receiving the last sacraments, while the church bells were ringing the Angelus and the people were praying the prayer he loved so much.

To St. Benedict Joseph Labre is due much of the increase of devotion in the keeping of the forty hours' devotion. The forty hours' prayer, but without exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, was begun in Milan by a Capuchin monk whose

name was Fr. Joseph, in the year 1556, in memory of the forty hours which Our Lord passed in the tomb. In 1560 it was sanctioned by Pope Pius IV. Then one of the brotherhoods in Rome instituted a forty hours' prayer in honor of the forty days of fasting of Christ. But even now the Blessed Sacrament was not exposed. It was not until the end of the eleventh century that the devotion was accompanied by the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Follow the example of St. Benedict Joseph Labre and pray before the Blessed Sacrament whenever you can, dear children, and thus offer reparation to the dear Heart of Jesus which is daily insulted by blasphemies and impiety.

ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA.

In Padua, in a beautiful church with six cupolas, is the grave of St. Anthony. His cradle was in Lisbon in Portugal. There he was born in 1195, the child of the noble family of the Buglione, and his baptismal name was Fernandez, or Ferdinand.

The child was trained to piety by his God-fearing parents. His mother taught him especially to love the Blessed Virgin. And for this reason St. Anthony was all his life a devoted servant of Mary. The child was bright and easy to teach, and when he was ten years old he was sent to the cathedral school in his native city. Here excellent masters taught him the beginnings of knowledge in matters worldly as well as spiritual. As a flower-bud opens to the spring sunshine, so the little Anthony opened his mind and heart to his teachers. And soon he decided to leave the world and its ambitions and seek the way of God.

When he was only fifteen years old he entered

the monastery of the Augustinians, just outside of the city of Lisbon. Here, as a novice, he was a model for the oldest. Fearing that the visits of his friends and relatives might prove too great a distraction to him when he was near Lisbon, he asked his superiors to send him to Coimbra, which was about one hundred miles away. Here Anthony served God for eight years.

Then it happened that the bodies of the five martyred Franciscans who were put to death in Morocco in the beginning of the year 1220 were brought to Coimbra. After that St. Anthony longed for nothing more ardently than to be permitted to win for himself the crown of a martyr. With the permission of his superiors he joined the Franciscans and took the name Anthony in honor of St. Anthony the Hermit. Then he asked to be sent to the Mahommedans in Africa. But the ways of man are not the ways of God, and the saint was intended for other things. He was compelled to return home on account of sickness, and on the way back his vessel was driven ashore at Sicily by a storm. Here St. Anthony found a refuge in a Franciscan convent, where he rested until his health was restored. Here he learned that St. Francis of Assisi, the founder of the Order of the Franciscans, had sent for all superiors to

come to Assisi for a conference. At this St. Anthony was delighted, thinking that now he would have a chance to see the great man of God, and he, too, went to Assisi.

Tired and worn out, he arrived at Assisi, and, full of humbleness and modesty, he kept quiet and in the background. So it happened that no one noticed the Portuguese stranger. Only the Brother Guardian marked him and, taking pity on him, sent him to an obscure convent. Here the saint lived for nine months, doing the most menial work and praying patiently.

Then the Bishop asked Anthony to preach at Forli, and Anthony obeyed. The sermon was on the mysteries of God, and it was full of inspiration and the deepest knowledge, so that all were carried away by its eloquence and confessed that they had never heard such preaching. St. Francis of Assisi heard of this, and, as the Superior-General of the Franciscans, ordered that Anthony should preach and teach in the future.

So the saint went from city to city, from village to village, preaching the word of God. With supernatural power he seemed to compel sinners to penance. Often there were as many as thirty thousand people to hear him. And the dear saint worked many miracles also. Once he was preach-

ing at Rimini, but his words fell on heedless ears and hard hearts. Then he left the city and went down to the shore of the sea. "Hear me, ye fishes," he cried out, "for the heretics in this city will not hear me." And behold the fishes large and small came up and listened and did not go back to the sea until the saint had blessed them. And then the people of the city begged him to come back and to preach to them the word of God.

St. Anthony remained only a year in Padua, but thousands were converted here, too. When he preached, the shops and places of business were closed and people came in crowds. It was in Padua, too, where a beautiful and radiant Babe appeared to him, put His little arms around his neck and was in turn clasped in the arms of the saint. It was the Infant Jesus who had come to call the faithful servant to heaven. Peacefully and joyously, the saint followed the call on June 13, 1231, in the thirty-sixth year of his age.

Pray to St. Anthony, the great miracle worker, dear children, so that he will help you, too, to find the way to heaven. The way is narrow and the entrance is small, but heaven is worth all possible trials.

ST. CHARLES BORROMEO.

St. Charles Borromeo, cardinal, archbishop, and confessor, belonged to the noble family of the Borromeo and was born at Castle Arona in Milan in the year 1538. Even in his earliest childhood he showed a liking for the religious life. He would imitate the ceremonies he saw in church by making little altars for himself and singing before them. And his good parents looked with favor upon these childish practices, for they were willing that he should become a priest.

When he had grown to be old enough to attend the academy at Pavia he devoted himself to both secular and ecclesiastical studies in the most thorough and diligent manner. And the while he was an example for his fellow students. He kept the purity of his life unspotted. He never was heard to speak a lewd word. If any one else spoke of such subjects he left at once. And he avoided the companionship of lazy, dis-

ST. ROSE OF LIMA

sipated, and wicked students. His time was given to study and prayer.

His uncle on his mother's side belonged to the princely family of the Medici. He saw and valued the learning and piety of his nephew, and when this uncle later became Pope Pius IV. he appointed Charles a cardinal and a year later Archbishop of Milan.

Charles did not disappoint the hopes his uncle, the Pope, had of him. He fulfilled the duties of his office with unfailing ardor. He was the first to promulgate the decrees of the Council of Trent in his province and to try to regulate ecclesiastical affairs according to them. He began at his own court and introduced the most rigid discipline. The revenues of his province he applied most conscientiously and was untiring in the correction of abuses. He founded convents and built churches and started schools for boys who were to be educated for the priesthood. He preached nearly every Sunday and holy day in the cathedral at Milan. He spent three months of the year travelling around in his diocese, even visiting the parishes away up in the Alps. And everywhere he went he roused the people to better lives and penitence.

In his holy work the Archbishop was not with-

out difficulties and persecutions. His enemies even attempted to take his life. But he bore everything with patience and was not to be turned from his way of doing. His holy life shows that only his eagerness to serve God and to help his fellow men were the reasons of his actions. He lived so simply that he was called the most self-denying man of his time. He ate little but bread and water, wore rough clothing, and gave his episcopal income and the income from his inherited estates to charitable works. He loved to meditate on the sufferings of Christ, and it was his custom to say: "Blessed are they who constantly contemplate the sufferings of Jesus. I believe it is impossible for such a one to sin."

His great charity was shown especially during the famine which desolated Milan in the year 1570 and in the terrible plague which followed the famine. He not only gave all he had, but begged from door to door himself for the starving. During the plague he refused to leave the city, saying to those who urged him to go: "Save your own lives; I may not leave my flock." He sold the furnishings and costly household belongings of his episcopal palace for the benefit of the sick, and had garments and bedclothes made out of the upholstering and draperies. He visited the

plague-stricken and gave them the last sacraments. To help bring about an end of the epidemic he ordered public prayers and penitential processions. He himself walked barefoot with a rope around his neck and a crucifix held aloft in these processions.

In spite of his heroic devotion to the service of God, he still looked upon himself as a great sinner and an unworthy servant. He made two retreats every year to prepare himself for a happy death. He felt death approaching when he was on a pilgrimage. He made a general confession and returned to Milan. Here he received the last sacraments and, because he wished to die as a penitent, he was laid upon a haircloth cover upon which blessed ashes were strewn. With his eyes fixed upon a picture of the Saviour the saint gave up his soul in the forty-sixth year of his earthly life, on the 4th of November, 1584.

Where, dear children, did the holy Archbishop get the strength for his great and unceasing labors? Listen: it was by his prayers. The boy kneeling before his little altar, the student surrounded by the temptations of youth at the academy, still praying and studying, and the man striving and working and praying. All his trials and needs were carried to God in

prayer, and he received in return strength and grace. To the Blessed Virgin, too, he had a tender devotion. He never heard the Angelus without kneeling down. He recited the Rosary every day and gave an hour to meditations and prayer every evening. To pray fervently and persistently, never omitting our daily prayers, that is the lesson, dear children, which this great saint teaches us. There is no better way to acquire graces and to conquer temptations and bad habits than prayer, especially the prayer that rises from a contrite and humble heart. "Prayer," as writes St. Ephraim, "subdues pride, puts out anger, destroys envy, and leads to piety. Prayer blesses man with strength and the household with prosperity. Prayer is the protection of the virgin, the weapon of the traveller, the guard of the sleeping, the hope of the waking, the fruitfulness of the field, the safety of the seafaring. Prayer defends the condemned, frees the imprisoned, and consoles the sorrowful. Prayer is the crown of parents, and brings peace to the departed. Prayer is the root and source of infinite treasures and is greater than the power of kings."

As food and drink are necessary to the material life, so prayer is necessary to the spiritual life. Therefore, too, the Saviour has so distinctly com-

manded us to pray. He has told us that we must pray without ceasing, and that if we ask we shall receive. More than that, He has Himself given us the example of prayer to the Father who is in heaven.

ST. LOUIS.

St. Louis was the son of Louis VIII., king of France. He was born in the year 1215 at Poissy, and all his life Louis had a special liking for Poissy because he received Baptism there. He often signed important documents "Louis, of Poissy." See, my dear children, how great was the saint's regard for the holy Sacrament of Baptism which made him a member of the Church of God!

The little prince had the good fortune to have a most excellent mother. "Guard against sin!" was the constant warning of Queen Blanche to the child who was to be the future king of France. Often she would say to him: "I know that I love you, my dear son, with the greatest tenderness that a mother can have; yet I would rather see you dead than guilty of mortal sin."

Such teachings made a deep impression on the prince, and he himself said later in life that he never forgot the instructions of his mother, but

thought of them every day. Oh, that all children would take their mothers' teachings to heart!

When he was twelve years old, Louis lost his father, and he himself ascended the throne under the regency of his mother. Mother and son were a beautiful example of love for each other. Blanche was a wise queen and Louis a dutiful and loving son. And such he remained even after he assumed sovereignty as Louis IX., when he was twenty years old.

He fulfilled his duties as ruler most conscientiously. He honored the Catholic Church as a most faithful son. In a short time he won the love of the whole country and was praised for his justice, his power, and his kindness. He had no love for display and costly feasts. Simplicity emanated from his whole being. In the brilliant court of France he led as simple a life as if he were a member of a religious Order. Two days in the week he abstained from meat and at certain times he wore a hairshirt. He attended Mass every day and read many devout books. He visited the hospitals and often nursed the sick, even the lepers, with his own hands.

In the twentieth year of his reign Louis became dangerously ill. Then he vowed to God that he would go upon a crusade to free the Holy Land

from the yoke of the infidels if He permitted him to recover. God heard his prayer, and the saintly king got well.

To fulfil his vow, Louis sailed for Africa with a large army in 1249. In the very first battle the brave king put the Saracens to flight. But then a plague of sickness broke out among his soldiers and, though Louis did the best he could, he was taken prisoner by the sultan. His courage, his calmness, and his faith in God impressed even the Saracens, who said of him that he bore himself as if he were their ruler and not their prisoner. But he had to pay a great sum of money—a million pieces of gold—as ransom for himself and his soldiers. He was five years in the East doing acts of charity and bringing blessing wherever he went. He ransomed countless Christians who had been made prisoners and then slaves; he converted many infidels and rebuilt Christian places and towns. At last the news of the death of his mother caused him to go back to France.

In France he was received with the greatest joy. Now he tried to improve his own country by wise laws. To further holy religion, upon which depends the happiness of a country, he built many churches and convents. And thus fifteen years more passed.

But while France was thus prospering, the condition of the Christians in the East was constantly becoming more unhappy. Terrible cruelties were inflicted on them. And thinking of these things, Louis was filled with a longing to try a second crusade. So he started out once more in the year 1270.

The nobles of his country joined him, full of enthusiasm. But alas! during the siege of Tunis, on the African coast, the plague broke out once more in the king's camp. This time he himself took it. Finding that he was dying, he asked to be laid on ashes, and here, after receiving the last sacraments, he died. His eyes turned heavenward, the king went in to the King of kings. This was August 25th, 1270.

On his deathbed the holy king exhorted his son to be faithful to his duties and said to him: "My dear son, the first thing that I commend to you is that you love God above all things. Live only for Him and be ready to endure sufferings, and trials, rather than to commit a mortal sin."

Dear children, it was the teaching of St. Louis' mother, the good Queen Blanche, repeated to his son. Do you repeat it often in your hearts, especially when you are tempted, remembering that sin is the greatest of all evils.

ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI.

St. Alphonsus belonged to the old and noble family of the Liguori. He was born in 1696 in Naples. Taught with care and tenderness by a pious mother, he showed even from his infancy an angelic patience, gentleness, and piety. Once when he won a small piece of money in a childish game, his playmates said to him, after the manner of children, "You cheated." But it was not true. However, Alphonsus laid down the coin and said, "What! do you think that one could offend the majesty of God for the sake of such a little piece of money?" Then the boy got up and went away. In the evening his playmates found him praying before a picture of Mary which he had fastened to a tree.

He venerated the Blessed Virgin every day, as he was taught to do by his mother, and to this devotion he remained faithful as long as he lived, and as all his after life showed. He called Mary his dear Mother, and greeted her

with a Hail Mary every time the clock struck the hour.

When he had grown to young manhood, St. Alphonsus took the greatest delight in visiting and nursing the sick in the hospitals and in praying before the Blessed Sacrament in the churches. This devotion, too, he kept up all through life. And no one has written more eloquently and beautifully about the Blessed Sacrament than has St. Alphonsus.

He studied civil law and was so successful that he was made a doctor of law when he was only seventeen years old. After attending court for three years more as a student, he began the public practice of his profession. Because of his insight and his eloquence he soon won the esteem of his fellow citizens. But to err is human; one day he overlooked an important matter in a trial. His opponent called his attention to his mistake. Alphonsus acknowledged his mistake and then left the court-room, saying, "Now I understand you, deceitful world." After this he studied theology.

After he was ordained to the priesthood he worked as a priest with boundless zeal in Naples. He preached to the poor in the market-places in the evenings and converted many great sinners. He also joined a missionary society, whose object

was to preach in the neighborhood of Naples and to visit the peasants, urge them to receive the sacraments, and lead them to a faithful life.

Convinced of the exalted usefulness of the missions, Alphonsus founded an Order that was to be especially devoted to the service of the poorest and most neglected classes. It was called the Congregation of the Holy Redeemer, or the Order of the Redemptorists. For a long time, thirty years, Alphonsus was the superior of this Order. There was no town in the two Sicilys in which he had not preached, moved the hearts of sinners to penance, and encouraged them to receive holy communion often. And the Blessed Virgin cast a wonderful charm about the person of her servant when he preached the message of salvation to men.

High offices were offered to Alphonsus in the Church, and in his humility he declined them all. But God wished to give the Church a holy bishop once more, and, in obedience to Pope Clement XIII., Alphonsus was compelled to accept the see of St. Agatha. In 1762 he went to his episcopal city. The word of his holiness went before him, and when he came the people welcomed him joyfully. He administered the duties of his office as Bishop with unusual zeal. Severe with himself,

he yet showed to others a touching gentleness. To the poor he gave nearly everything that he possessed. To his priests and the religious he was particularly kind. He introduced into his diocese everywhere the daily visitations to the Blessed Sacrament and other pious devotions.

In the last seventeen years of his life, Alphonsus suffered much from a bodily weakness. His head was twisted and bent forward by an incurable disease. The holy Bishop endured this affliction with heavenly patience, and worked on so industriously that he did not even rest when Pius VI. relieved him of the burden of his office, although he was then eighty years old.

Instead, he returned to his cell in the monastery and wrote those wonderful books in which he shows his love for the Blessed Sacrament and the holy Mother of God. It was his joy to kneel for hours before the tabernacle. At such times a heavenly light seemed to illuminate his face.

The saint lived to be nearly ninety-one years old, and died a blessed death after receiving holy communion with indescribable fervor.

Dear children, one of the best aids in leading a holy life is the love of the Blessed Sacrament. He who visits the Holy of holies gathers countless graces.

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER.

The Castle of Xavier is a few miles away from the city of Pomplona in Spain. There St. Francis was born in the year 1506. For this reason he has the surname Xavier.

Great talents and personal beauty distinguished the youth. When he was eighteen years old he was sent to Paris to study, where he made such progress that he was soon made a doctor of philosophy and was chosen above others to teach philosophy. The great admiration which he won in Paris was the reason why he did not remain entirely free from ambition for distinctions and honors.

Then it happened that Ignatius of Loyola, a countryman of Francis', also came to Paris to study. He learned to know Francis, and as Ignatius understood very well that ambition has brought many a one to the fall from grace, he tried to show his friend how vain is all earthly glory, and to win him for heavenly things. Again and again he repeated to Francis the words of the

Saviour: "For what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?" And the word of God at last conquered Francis. He renounced his ambitions and gave himself up entirely to good works. Then he joined St. Ignatius in the Society which he and five companions formed in the year 1534, by taking the vow in the church in Montmartre to devote their lives to the conversion of heretics and unbelievers, and to work for the salvation of men. This was the foundation of the Society of Jesus. And now Francis Xavier had no desire save the humility of the cross and the wish to give glory to God. "Give me souls, O Lord!" was ever his prayer.

Until the new Order was sanctioned by the Holy Father, Francis, to practice self-denial, nursed the sick in Venice. After two months he was ordained and read his first holy Mass with tears of joy in his eyes.

After the Order received the approbation of Pope Paul II., Francis was delighted to be sent to India as a missionary. He left Europe in the year 1541, taking with him only his breviary, his crucifix, and a few devout books. For thirteen months the ship floated on the immense waste of water through which it had to pass. This time

was used by St. Francis to instruct and convert the sailors of the ship. At last they reached Goa, then the main center of the Portuguese colonies in India. The inhabitants of Goa, though most of them were baptized and ought to have been Christians, had lost their faith and lived like heathens. In a wonderfully short time Francis had won them back to the way of salvation.

After that he began his great missionary travels. For ten years he went from land to land, suffering the greatest hardships and tribulations. He crossed mountains and wore his feet bloody on hot and rocky deserts. A little rice cooked in water and some salt fish were his usual food. He baptized almost a million people with his own hands. Often the number of converts was so great, that his hand was lamed from baptizing and he could not raise it any more. God blessed his missionary work with many miracles, and to him belongs, outside of the Apostle St. Paul, the most glory for spreading the Gospel among the peoples of the earth. He has been called the Apostle of India and Japan.

The saint went from India to Japan in 1549. Here he spent two years and four months preaching to the Japanese and saving thousands of souls.

After this the ardor for souls which filled the

ST. ALOYSIUS GONZAGA

saint moved him to go to the immense Chinese Empire, where millions and millions of people have not heard of the Saviour even to this day. But his work was at an end. On the journey to China he fell sick of fever and died on an island in a miserable hut, forsaken by companions, without the help of a physician or a nurse, racked by pains and aches. Nevertheless, he remained cheerful and patient. His eyes fixed upon a crucifix, he went to his eternal home with the words: "In Thee, O Lord, I have hoped, and I shall not be forsaken in all eternity." This was on December 2, 1552.

The wonderful example of St. Francis Xavier moved other Catholic priests to become missionaries and preach the Gospel to the heathen, in obedience to the command of Our Lord. Then they saw with their own eyes how thousands of children who are sickly or burdensome to their parents are exposed by the roadside in China, where they are eaten by dogs or pigs. This is a terrible thought, but even more terrible is it to think that all these innocent children must be left to die without the Sacrament of Baptism.

A French missionary, Charles August de Forbin-Janson, was so moved that when he returned to France and was made Bishop he tried

to think of a way to save these heathen children. God inspired him, and he conceived the idea of the Confraternity of the Child Jesus. The members of this Confraternity are nearly all children. They pray every day for the little pagan children, and pay a few cents every month into the funds of the Confraternity. Many drops make a river, and many pennies a great sum of money. For this sum of money Chinese babies are bought from their parents, baptized, and raised in Catholic orphan asylums.

Do you belong to the Confraternity of the Child Jesus, my dear little reader? If not, ask your parents to let you join. They will surely give you a few pennies for your monthly contribution. Perhaps you have even now spending money, which you use only for candies and useless trifles. Offer up these pennies instead for the saving of the helpless heathen babies. Do it for the love of the Child Jesus. What you do for an abandoned child in a far-away country, Christ will look upon as though you had done it for Him.

St. Francis Xavier had no hesitation about making a sacrifice of money to the Lord. A heathen king once offered him much gold and silver as a present. The holy man said: "I did not come to gather treasures or riches, but to

bring to all the one great treasure of the knowledge of the true God." This answer so pleased the king that he granted the saint's prayer to be permitted to preach the Gospel in that country. And for these sacrifices and labors the Saviour rewarded the saint by a surprising heavenly consolation, so that the saint was wont to say: "The best and deepest joy is that which God gives to those who educate the untaught for Him. And to win this joy, no danger should daunt."

ST. OTTILIA.

St. Ottilia, or Odilia, was the daughter of Adalrich, Duke of Alsace, and of his pious wife, Bereswinda. She was born in the year 662, and was blind at birth. Her father, though he was a Christian, was rough and wild, as was natural in those barbarian days, and thought it a disgrace to have a blind child. Then he was disappointed at having a daughter when he wanted a son. For these reasons he tried to have the child killed. But its mother secretly gave it into the care of a faithful maid servant, and after it was old enough had it brought to the Convent of Palma, the abbess of which was a relative of hers.

Here the blind Ottilia found loving care, and grew up a pious, obedient child. Nevertheless, she had not been baptized, probably because in getting her away quietly from her father's house there had been no good chance and afterwards it was forgotten.

So she grew to be twelve years old and was still

unbaptized. This was revealed to St. Erhard, Bishop of Regensburg, in a dream. The saint went at once to the convent and baptized Ottilia in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And behold! as soon as the light of faith came into Ottilia's young soul the blindness left her physical eyes. Ottilia could see. Full of gratitude to God, she vowed her life to His services. The word of this miracle spread over the land, and reached the duke's castle also. But the duke was not moved. He only hardened his heart the more. For this reason Ottilia remained in her convent home working patiently and fervently to become more holy. She was particularly kind to the poor, giving them the gifts her mother secretly sent her. That her father did not seem to love her grieved the gentle Ottilia. "Oh," she often thought, "if I could only win him to think well of me!" She told the desire of her heart to one of her brothers, of whom her father was particularly fond. His name was Hugo, and he went to his father to plead for his outcast sister. But he could not soften his father. Then Hugo wrote to the sister that she should come herself, and perhaps she could succeed. This seemed to be a good way to Ottilia, and she started out for the home which was denied to her, the daughter of

the duke, while the children of his poorest laborer found shelter in it.

At the foot of the hill on which the castle stood Ottilia knelt down and prayed to God for help and guidance. Her father heard that she was coming. He blamed Hugo and struck him so hard that the boy fell down, wounded to death. But when the angry father saw the child he loved best dying through his violence, contrition seized him and he began to see the terrible wickedness of his hardness of heart. Then Ottilia entered and sank on her knees before her father. And he yielded at last and, raising her from the ground, gave her the kiss of peace.

From that time things changed in the castle. Ottilia's gentleness and piety completed the conversion of her father. After this Adalrich emulated his God-fearing wife in good works.

When Ottilia expressed a desire to found a community of pious virgins, her father joyfully consented. He gave her Castle Hohenburg, afterward called Odilienberg. Ottilia turned it into a convent, whose first abbess she was. At the foot of the hill she built a hospital for the sick and the poor. At last her parents also moved to a house near the convent to prepare themselves for a happy death.

As the abbess, Ottilia was a model for her spiritual daughters. With prayers and meditations she combined works of penance and of charity. Every day she went to the hospital herself and helped care for the sick with her own hands.

God glorified His faithful servant by giving her the power of working miracles. To this day a little spring flows from the side of a rock from which it burst at the prayer of the saint for a poor sick man whom she met, fainting here for thirst. Those suffering from diseases of the eye bathe in it, asking the prayers of St. Ottilia, the patroness of the blind.

After a touching farewell to her sisters in the convent, Ottilia closed her eyes to the light of earth on December 2d, in the year 720, to look upon Him who dwells in eternal light. To her grave on the Odilienberg, which means Odilia's Hill, pilgrims go to this day, particularly from Alsace, as Ottilia is the patroness of that province.

You who read this story of Ottilia each have two eyes—two clear, bright eyes. Think what a great gift is sight. You can see the blue sky, the golden sunshine, the many-colored flowers, the green grass, the chirping birds, and all the other animals. With your eyes you can see your dear parents, your sisters and brothers, your playmates,

and all the people. But poor little Ottilia was blind, and yet she had done no wrong; she was an innocent child. Indeed it is a great gift, the sight of the eyes. Be thankful for it, and never let your eyes rest upon anything sinful and wicked, for that is very wrong.

Outside of your eyes, you have, dear children, many other gifts that were denied to poor little Ottilia. You have your home, and the care and love of your father and mother. And are you thankful for these gifts, too?

The senseless animals know those who are kind to them, and show their gratitude by affection and obedience. How much more should man, who is gifted with reason, show his gratitude to the good God?

St. John Chrysostom says: "The thought of the beneficence of God is the best teacher of a virtuous life." And St. Hieronymus says that the greatness of the gifts we have received from God surpasses the limits of human understanding.

ST. ANDREA CORSINI.

THE parents of the holy Bishop, Andrea Corsini, lived in Florence. For a long time they had no child, and therefore prayed often and fervently that God might give them an heir.

One day when they were in the cathedral they heard the words from Holy Scripture: "The tithes and first-fruits shalt thou give me, and the first-born among thy sons shalt thou consecrate to me." These words moved them wonderfully, and they both vowed that if their prayer was heard they would give their child to religion.

And, on the 30th of November in the year 1302, God gave them a son. He was named Andrea, because the feast of St. Andrew was being celebrated on that day. Corsini was the name of the noble family to which the parents belonged.

Remembering their vow, the parents tried to raise their child in piety and in the fear of God. But to their great grief, Andrea resisted their teachings. He was of a lively temperament, and loved

fun and gaiety; leaving the ways of virtue little by little, he fell in with evil companions and gave himself up to dissipations. And then, as well as now, it was true that evil associations corrupt good morals.

How his good parents suffered the while! Particularly was his poor mother, Perigrina, sore of heart, for her prayers and pleadings were alike wasted on the wayward son. She found her only consolation in prayer to Mary. "Oh, Mother of Our Saviour," she prayed, "thou knowest that I dedicated my son to thee in his earliest infancy. Thou knowest that I have done everything I could to keep him unspotted from the temptations of the world. Oh, pray for him, that he may return to God and not be lost for all eternity!"

One day when the poor mother was praying like this again, the son came into her room. He was just getting ready to go out for some wild revel. Then his mother said to him: "I do not doubt any longer that you are that wolf which I saw in my dreams before you were born. Yet the wolf I saw went to the house of the Carmelites and was there suddenly changed into a lamb. The first part of my dream has proved true. But when will the second part be fulfilled? When will you change from a wolf into a lamb?"

These words of the mother and the tears she shed, as she said them, moved the son, so that he went at once to the Carmelite church. He fell on his knees before the altar of the Blessed Virgin. He wept for grief over his past life and, moved by the grace of God, he decided not to go back to the world, but to remain in the monastery.

At the end of the year Andrea took the vows of the Order. He was altogether changed, and the wolf had truly become a lamb. He now loved prayer, silence, humility, obedience, and penance. Although he was assailed by temptations, his ardor did not cool. The result of his striving was that he constantly became more perfect in virtue.

He was sent by his superiors to Paris to study, and here, too, his progress was edifying. After a few years he returned as doctor of theology.

In the year 1328 he was ordained to the priesthood. He began his labors by preaching in Florence. After a short time he was chosen prior of his monastery. A little later he was made Bishop of Fiesole, though in his humility he protested against the honor, and now lived entirely for the salvation of his fellow men and his own perfection. He doubled his works of penance, fasted, wore a hair shirt next his skin, slept on the hard wood, and prayed day and night.

Strict as Andrea Corsini was with himself, he was most forbearing and gentle with others, particularly sinners, whom he thus won to penitence. His love for the poor was boundless.

On January 6th, 1373, the soul of the holy Bishop went to heaven, there to praise the Lamb of God forever.

Obedient and pious children are the greatest delight of parents; disobedient and wicked children are their greatest grief. How happy are the parents who can say: "Our child is as meek and gentle as a lamb." But how sore is the heart of those who must say: "Our child is like a wolf."

O, you children who read this, what do your parents say of you? Are you gentle and patient, meek and obedient as a lamb? Or are you bold and wild and deceitful as a wolf? Ask yourselves, and then let your own conscience answer. And if you have to answer "I am like a wolf," then, I beg of you, follow the example of St. Andrea Corsini.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS.

St. Thomas Aquinas was born in the year 1226 in the kingdom of Naples. His father was a count, and was of the family of Aquin. The family home was Castle Rocca-Secca. Even as a child, St. Thomas seemed blessed. Once when he was to be bathed he held a little card with the words "Ave Maria" on it in his hands, and no one in the house had given it to him.

When the boy was five years old he was sent to the Benedictines on Mount Casino for training and instruction. Here he showed as great diligence in study as he did in pious practices. His teachers said that they never before had had such a wonderfully gifted and so touchingly pious a child.

What do your teachers say of you, dear children? Such wonderful gifts of mind as St. Thomas Aquinas had, God has not given every child, but diligent and pious you can all be, and by diligence many natural gifts can be replaced.

Even when he was only ten years old, Thomas had progressed so far in his studies that he could be sent to the high school in Naples. Here he carefully avoided all dangerous society; prayer and study were his preference. He liked, too, to give alms to the poor. Full of love for Jesus and filled with a dislike for worldly pleasures, he decided when he was seventeen years old to enter the Dominican Order.

This resolve was doubtless pleasing to God, but worldly minded people tried to persuade Thomas not to do so. His mother was against the religious life; his proud brothers, Landulf and Raynald, could not bear to think that a count of Aquin should become a beggarly monk, as they put it. Everything was tried by them to turn Thomas from his desire. And when persuasion did not succeed, they did not hesitate to use force.

To protect Thomas against the persecutions of his relatives, his superiors sent him to Paris. He started out on the journey, but his brothers seized him, dragged him to the family castle, and locked him up in a tower. Here Thomas was a prisoner for two years. But nothing was able to shake his steadfastness, and his determination to heed the voice of God rather than the commands of men.

A woman who was sent into his room to tempt him he drove out with a burning firebrand from the hearth. His two sisters who tried to coax him to give up the religious life were so carried away, when he spoke to them as if inspired of the vanity of earthly things, that they let their brother down from the tower in a basket. Below his brothers in religion received him.

After returning to the monastery, Thomas was sent to Cologne by his superiors, to attend the lectures of the great Albertus Magnus, whose renown then reached to every part of Europe. Under this great teacher Thomas made wonderful progress. Nevertheless, he was so humble and silent that some of his fellow pupils nicknamed him the "silent ox." But Albertus Magnus said this ox would soon make a sound that the whole world would hear.

When he was barely twenty-two years old, Thomas became a professor. As such he taught in Paris, in Bologna, Fondi, Pisa, and Orvieto with extraordinary success. It was true: the whole world spoke of him and heard of him. He was looked upon as a giant of knowledge. But did he become vain? Oh, no; humbly he once followed to market a lay brother who did not know him, and carried a basket for him. He only sought to promote

the glory of God by his knowledge and his angelically pure life. Prayer was his constant companion. Indeed, he attained to his great wisdom chiefly by prayer. The Holy Spirit inspired him when he occupied himself with the mysteries of God.

The saint wrote many books on the truths of the faith, and these are written with such clearness and are thought out so acutely that they are to this day the foundation of the study of theology. When Thomas had completed a part of his works, the Lord said to him: "Thou hast written well of Me, Thomas. What dost thou ask for reward?" To which the saint answered, "Nothing but Thee, Lord."

Exhausted by his great mental labors, Thomas wished to retire to the monastery at Naples, which was very dear to him. But Pope Gregory X. sent for him to come to the Council at Lyons. On the way there the saint had an attack of fever. He was received and cared for in the convent of Fossa Nuova, but on the 7th of March, 1274, he went home to God, the First Source of all wisdom.

St. Thomas Aquinas, like St. Augustine and St. Ambrose, is called a doctor of the Church. Because he was truly an angel in his labors as a teacher, he is called the "angelic doctor."

ST. FRANCIS OF SALES

To you, dear children, the saint teaches eagerness to study. Be diligent, that you may give pleasure to your parents and teachers, and that you may get along later in life. But unite prayer with your diligence and industry, as St. Thomas did. Prayer will preserve you from the pride that destroys, if you succeed in distancing others in school.

ST. LIDWINA.

It was Palm Sunday of the year 1380. In Schiedam in Holland, in the parish church, the Passion of Our Lord was being sung, when a little daughter was born to a poor couple of that town. The child was called Lidwina, which means "weeping for sadness." And indeed the name seemed to have a prophetic meaning. For truly the child to whom the name was given was destined to a life of sadness and pain from her fifteenth year to her death.

Lidwina, who was also called Lidia, was beautiful of face and figure. There were suitors for her hand even in her earliest maidenhood. But the maiden, raised by a pious mother, had taken the vow of virginity even in her tenth year. For this reason she refused all suitors, and said to her father, who would have liked to have had a rich son-in-law: "If I can not avoid being sought for in any other way, I shall so disfigure myself that no one will want me any more."

It was true, she should not be sought any more; Lidwina's heavenly Bridegroom would take care of that.

It was Candlemas. After the custom of Holland, the Dutch boys and girls amused themselves on the ice. The boys and girls skated merrily, and Lidwina, too. Then it happened that one of her friends, slipping and falling, caught Lidwina and threw her so heavily on a pile of ice that one of Lidwina's ribs was broken. This was the beginning of the dreadful malady from which Lidwina suffered for thirty-eight years with indescribable patience.

Although Lidwina's parents called a physician to treat her, the broken rib would not knit. First, a large internal abscess formed, which was most painful, and the pus from which sometimes came out through her mouth. This abscess caused her to be very thirsty, and yet if she tried to drink she would immediately vomit what she had swallowed.

At first Lidwina crept around the house on her hands and knees, but at last she became so feeble that she had to go to bed. And for thirty-three years she lay thus in bed.

Soon her body became so weak and stiff that she could hardly move a limb, and had to lie on

her back all the time. Headache, backache, sore throat—day and night she was in misery somewhere. Her right arm became entirely useless, and parts of her body suffered from bed-sores, while sometimes blood would come from her nose and mouth.

In the beginning of her sickness Lidwina was impatient. When her friends came to see her and she saw them well and happy she could not help but wish that she, too, might get better, and then she cried and complained. Her father confessor advised her to be patient, and thus to increase the merits of her soul, and for her comfort to think of the sufferings of Christ. Lidwina began these meditations, but ceased after a while because of indifference. Then her confessor said to her: "You must make yourself think of the suffering Christ." Lidwina obeyed, and behold! gradually she began to feel such sweet joy in these meditations on the sufferings of the Saviour, that it seemed to her that not she, but the Saviour, bore the pains of her body.

Lidwina's sufferings increased constantly. An intermittent fever attacked her, which lasted for seventeen years. The sick girl would burn with fever and then shake with an icy chill. For a long time she could not take food, nor drink, nor could

she sleep. It seemed beyond understanding that she should live, but the holy communion gave her some strength. At last her internal organs seemed to be degenerating, and she would vomit pieces of lung and other matter. That was not enough. Her right eye became blind and the left very weak. Now she could not endure the light any longer, but had to lie in the dark all the time. Because a feather bed was unbearable on account of her many bed-sores, she had to lie on straw with her back against a hard board. What a pitiful fate! Then came the terrible winter of 1408, when even the fishes in the rivers froze to death. Lidwina's poor limbs turned black from the cold. But even this was not all. A stone in her bladder gave her such pain that she was often unconscious for several hours from it.

The greater the pains she suffered, the more beautiful and real became her patience. It may even be said that she suffered with a cheerful heart. The constant meditation on the sufferings of Christ, prayer, and frequent communion filled her with an unspeakable sweetness and heavenly peace.

And yet the measure of her miseries was not full. Her mother died, and then her father, and all who were near to her and loved her. For-

saken, she lay in her little room under the roof. Then a malicious woman came into her room and called her a hypocrite; and rough officials and physicians pestered her with their curiosity.

At last the Saviour put upon her the stigmata of His holy wounds, a new source of pain, and yet, too, of heavenly consolation. "If I could obtain a surcease of pain by one Hail Mary," said the saint now, "I would not say it." And the Saviour consoled her in her desolation. Often He sent His angels. Then her poor little room became filled with sweetest odors and heavenly radiance, and behold! this radiance did not blind Lidwina's sick eyes.

In the last year of her life the saint often saw a rose-bush. Her guardian angel revealed to her that when the buds should all have opened she would die. The fulfilment of the vision came soon. On Easter night in 1433 Lidwina heard the heavenly Alleluia, and on the third day after Easter, April 14th, her angelic soul left her pain-racked body. Soon the corpse shone with a wonderful radiance and beauty. From far and near people came to see the miracle.

When you are sick, dear children, there is no better way to cultivate patience than prayer, the sacraments, and the contemplation of the suffer-

ings of Our Lord. By the means of these, Lidwina made her path of suffering the path to heaven. Christ Himself says:

"If any man will follow Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me."

Therefore do not complain, dear children, if you are sick. The sickness may be a means for your salvation in the hands of God.

ST. FRANCIS BORGIA.

St. Francis Borgia, confessor, was the son of a Spanish duke, and first saw the light of the world in 1510 in the city of Gandia. From his childhood he showed a pious inclination, which was strengthened by wise training. Diligent in attending Mass, he also liked to hear the sermons. One sermon on the sufferings of Christ and another on the Last Judgment moved him wonderfully; after that nothing could take away from him the fear of God.

Even as a youth, Francis would have liked to enter a religious Order, but his father sent the boy of seventeen to the court of the Emperor Charles V. In the midst of the temptations of court life Francis kept his soul unspotted by vice and dissipations. This steadfastness he owed to his fervent prayers, to his veneration for Mary, his penances, and his frequent confession and communion. His pious life won for him the respect of all. At the request of the emperor,

with whom he was a favorite, he married a lady of the court who, like him, was noted for her piety.

The pious couple led an exemplary life. The eight children which God sent them were raised in His fear. Francis himself employed his time conscientiously. He abhorred gambling, and would not permit his servants to play for money either. "There is much loss in gambling: the loss of money, the loss of time, the loss of devotion, and of conscience." He scorned to read idle books merely for amusement, but all the greater pleasure did he take in reading devout and spiritual works. Several illnesses from which he suffered helped to turn his mind even more from the things of the world to the things of heaven.

In the year 1539 the Empress Isabella died. Francis was given the duty of escorting her body from Madrid to Granada. Before the body was let down into the tomb the coffin was opened once more. All those present shrank back in horror at the grewsome sight. The face of the empress, who had been noted for her beauty, was horribly disfigured by the decomposition that had set in. A pestilential odor came from the dead body and drove every one away. Borgia alone stood still and meditated on what he saw. After the burial was

completed he went to a room, fell on his knees before a picture of the crucified Christ, and cried with tears in his eyes: "No, no, Lord; after this I do not want to serve any master of whom death can deprive me." And he promised, as soon as it should be possible for him to do so, to enter an Order.

After returning from Granada, Francis was appointed viceroy of Catalonia by the emperor. It was a brilliant and great position, but, in his grand palace, Francis led the life of a religious. Prayers and fasts he combined with the frequent reception of the sacraments. Every Sunday and holy day he knelt humbly among his subjects and received the body of the Lord. He administered his high office with the strictest justice and with great care and gentleness towards the poor, so that the people loved him like a father.

The death of his father compelled Francis to return to his home and take up the government of his own duchy. Soon after that, in the year 1546, his wife died also. Remembering his vow, Francis set his affairs in order, arranged for his children, and went to Rome to St. Ignatius, the founder of the Society of Jesus. There he heard a rumor that Pope Julius intended to make him a Cardinal. Shrinking from such an honor in his

humility, he hurried back to Spain, and was ordained to the priesthood at Ognate.

As a priest the former duke and viceroy took special pleasure in going from house to house and asking for alms for Christ's sake, in instructing children and the poor in the truths of religion, and in preaching in the various provinces of Spain and Portugal in obedience to the orders of St. Ignatius. St. Francis was destined to see the death of Emperor Charles V., who had retired to a monastery, and to preach his funeral sermon.

The election of Francis to be the general of the whole Society of Jesus compelled him to go to Rome to live. For seven years he directed the affairs of the Society with wisdom and energy, giving particular attention to the missions.

After a very earnest and pious preparation for his death, the saint died at Rome in the year 1572, at the age of sixty-two. His holy body is laid to rest in Madrid.

St. Francis Borgia was wont to say: "The death of the empress waked me from death." The saint meant the death of the soul. My dear children, bring to your minds often how death gives the human body and all its beauties and graces over to decay. Then you will find it foolish to be vain of your bodies and to put great worth on

physical attractions. Then you will find it wise to strive for the everlasting, the eternal, the indestructible. Particularly if you are inclined to vanity and the delight of the senses—think of death.

ST. STANISLAUS KOSTKA.

St. Stanislaus Kostka, confessor, was born in the year 1550 at Castle Kostkovo in Poland. His people were wealthy and belonged to the nobility. Even as a child his piety and kindness of heart were so marked that the servants always spoke of him as "the angel." Stanislaus deserved this name all the more because he loved holy purity above all things. He blushed, he even fainted when an impure word was spoken in his presence. Fine clothes, play, company, and festivities did not please the boy; his dearest occupation was to study and to pray.

When Stanislaus was fourteen years old, he and an elder brother, Paul, were sent to Vienna, accompanied by a tutor. In Vienna the boys were placed in a Jesuit school. Stanislaus distinguished himself at this school by his piety and his diligence. Then the school was closed on account of war, and the tutor and his two charges took lodgings in the house of a Lutheran.

Paul lived as did most of the students of those days and now, too, who attend the higher schools. He loved company and pleasures of all kinds. Stanislaus, on the other hand, was studious and quiet, and kept up his devout practices. He prayed much, fasted, and on certain days wore a hair shirt next to his skin. Before attending his classes he visited the Blessed Sacrament in the church. He recited the Rosary every day and attended two Masses daily. Every evening he examined his conscience. At midnight he arose to pray, if it did not happen that this hour found him still praying. Every Sunday and holy day he received communion. Then his face seemed to shine with a holy radiance like that of an angel. He called the Queen of Heaven his Mother, and prayed to her every day, imploring her blessing.

This saintly life was offensive to his worldly minded brother. In his anger he abused Stanislaus—even struck him. What did Stanislaus do? Did he talk in the same way or strike back? Oh, no; nothing like that. The saintly youth endured the abuse with the greatest patience, only saying: "I desire to live in a way that I know is pleasing to God, whether it pleases my brother or not."

At this time Stanislaus became seriously ill.

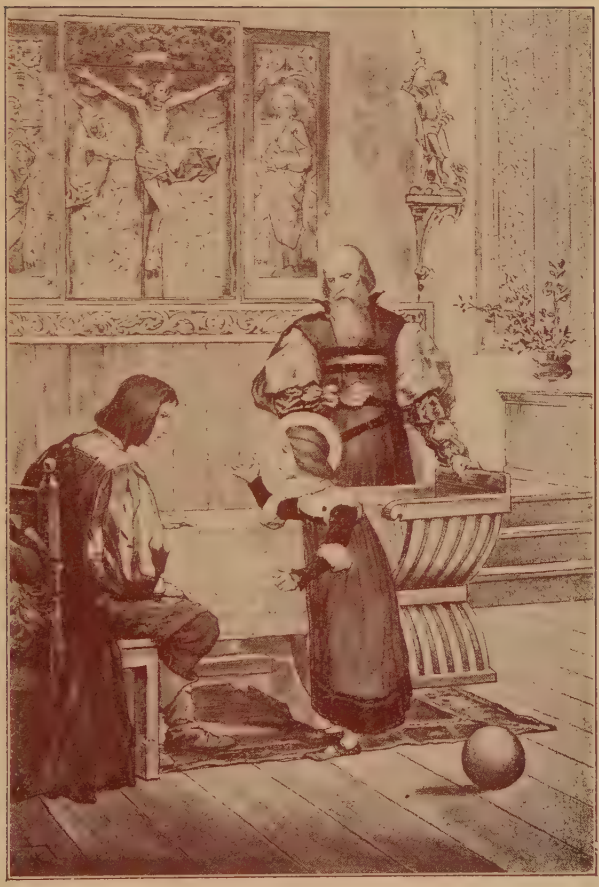
When the illness threatened to be fatal, the youth yearned to receive the sacraments of the dying. But the Lutheran landlord did not want a Catholic priest to come into his house with the Viaticum. And Stanislaus' brother and his tutor gave him no assistance in his pious wishes. Then Stanislaus prayed fervently and lo! during the night the Host was brought to him in a wonderful manner by St. Barbara, accompanied by two angels. Just after that the Blessed Virgin appeared to him, holding out the Christ-Child for him to kiss. Then she said to him: "Go into the society of my Son." He was entirely well at once and arose, his sole thought now being to enter the Society of Jesus.

The superiors of the Order in Vienna did not want to receive him without the consent of his parents. Stanislaus, believing that we must obey God rather than men, went secretly to Dillingen in Bavaria to the provincial Peter Canisius, and told him of his intention. Canisius examined him as to his vocation and then sent him to Rome. There Stanislaus begged St. Francis Borgia, who was then the general of the Order, for admission, and St. Francis granted his request. Stanislaus was then seventeen years old.

As a novice the holy youth edified his brothers

in the Order by his obedience, his works of penance, his fervent devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, and his tender veneration of the Mother of God. But he was scarcely ten months in the house of the Order when he was attacked by a fever. As he lay down in bed he made the sign of the cross, saying: "If it is the will of God that I do not arise again from this bed, may His will be done; and believe me, I shall not arise again." His presentiment was fulfilled. After four days he died, ripe for heaven, though still so young. It was on the 15th of August, the feast of the Assumption, in the year 1568.

Dear children, it is the duty of brothers and sisters to give each other a good example. St. Stanislaus Kostka did his part well and faithfully. When his older brother rewarded him only with abuse and contempt for doing so, Stanislaus remained calm, patient, and amiable. Do likewise, dear children. One more thing I must tell you, the holy life of Stanislaus had such an effect on his brother in the end, that the brother was turned from his wicked and careless ways and died a happy death. See, this is the result of the example of virtue.



ST. JANE FRANCES DE CHANTAL

ST. TERESA.

St. Teresa, who was born in Avila in Spain in the year 1515, was raised very conscientiously by her parents, who belonged to the high nobility. As a child she read the legends of the saints very often. The example of the martyrs filled her with a glowing desire to die for Christ also. She and a brother secretly left the house of their parents to go to Africa among the infidels. But just outside of the city they met an uncle, who brought the young would-be heroes of the faith back to their anxious parents. When she was twelve years old her mother died. Teresa's grief was great. Then one day she knelt down before a picture of the Blessed Virgin and prayed: "O Mother of mercy, I choose thee now to be my mother, receive a poor orphan among thy children."

You know, dear children, what one must do to remain a "child of Mary." Teresa forgot for a while. She went about with a gay cousin, and

spent hours reading romances and tales of adventure. The result was that she neglected her prayers, that she spent much time and money for clothes and finery, that she became vain and full of frivolity; in fact, that she was filled with the spirit of the world, instead of God. Yet she preserved her purity as her most priceless treasure.

Then her anxious father sent his fifteen-year-old daughter to a convent of the Augustinians. The removal from the occasion of temptation, the society of pious Sisters, the renewed reading of devout books, all brought about the desired effect, and Teresa's naturally pious inclination was reawakened. But it took a long illness, a stay with a saintly uncle, and the reading of the letters of St. Jerome to turn the mind of the maiden entirely from earthly things and move her to serve God in the religious life.

Her father, who loved her tenderly, did not want to permit his daughter to enter into an Order. Then Teresa fled from home, having in mind only her eternal salvation and obedience to God. On All Souls' Day in 1533 she was admitted into the Carmelite convent at Avila. On the way to the convent she was seized by such a violent revulsion against the religious life that her whole body shook. She looked upon this as a tempta-

tion, and kept on her way. No sooner had she put on the habit of the Order than an unspeakable peace filled her heart and soul.

After a year of holy fervor she took the vows of the Order. Soon after that she became sick again, and her limbs remained twisted as the result. Then she had to struggle for a few years longer with the love of the world, developed by the gay life she led for a while and the reading of romantic books. At last the meditation on the suffering of Christ cured her changefulness of mind, and she was filled with fervent love for the crucified Saviour. To become like Him through suffering was now her desire: "Either to die, O Lord, or to suffer, is my only prayer."

God sent His handmaiden many trials of the mind and of the body, scarcely a day passing for her without suffering. To these she added many voluntary works of penance. Once the place in hell, into which she might have been plunged by her indifference, was revealed to her in a vision. Her hair rose up in horror at the sight, and her eagerness to serve God and to induce others to do likewise was doubled after that. Teresa's soul was transfigured by the purest love of God. Christ appeared to her repeatedly, and a seraph wounded her heart with a fiery arrow. She received the gift

of prophecy and, filled with heavenly wisdom, she was a leader in the spiritual life. Her great gifts are manifest in the writings which she left to us.

But with all the gifts vouchsafed her, Teresa was so humble that she looked upon herself as one of the greatest sinners of the world, and wished to be so thought by others, too.

When the saint prayed she was sometimes seen to be surrounded by a heavenly radiance. Once she was heard to exclaim: "Oh, but one God, one death, one soul." Afterwards she explained her words. There is but one God; if He is offended, there is none other to whom we can turn. There is but one death; if one dies once out of the state of grace he can never return to die again more happily. There is but one soul; if a man has lost that, he has none other to save.

In the convents of her Order she introduced the old severe rules in spite of many obstacles and difficulties. On the basis of these rigid rules she founded many new convents for women and monasteries for men, for which reason she is called the foundress of the Reformed Carmelites.

On a journey to Alba the saint passed away, consumed by the desire to behold her heavenly Bridegroom. This was in the year 1582. In Alba her uncorrupted body rests in a beautiful tomb.

From the life of St. Teresa you have learned, my dear children, the result of the reading of idle and indifferent books. The reading of a single frivolous book in the unformed time of youth can give a false direction to a whole life. And not always is the damage done by such reading repaired and atoned for in after-life, as was the case with St. Teresa. Beware, therefore, dear children, of careless reading, and do not read a book unless it is given to you to read by those who are older and more experienced than you are. Beware, too, of the love of dress, for it leads away from spiritual things and from heaven, and fosters pride and vanity. When you dress to go to church on Sunday, remember that it is not for the sake of the people but for the sake of God that you do so. If you wish to read on Sunday, read a devout and instructive book. By doing so you keep the day holy, as the Third Commandment reminds you that you must keep it.

He who reads frivolous books on Sunday, who indulges in vain thoughts about clothes, makes himself worthy of temporal and eternal punishment. For the Lord who said in the Old Testament that he who breaks the Sabbath shall die the death, is still the same, and will remain the same through all eternity.

BLESSED PETER CANISIUS.

THE holy Church has been persecuted in all lands and at all times. Yet the most dangerous enemies of the Church were not the great and mighty pagans, but the heretics who separated from the Church and started religions of their own. Thus we have the split in the Church. In the year 1521 Luthor began to preach against Catholic truth and found many followers in Germany. For this reason we have the present division among Christians. But the Church was not overpowered and never can be, because Jesus Christ promised that she should not be when He said that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against her." Never has He deserted His Church. This was shown, too, in a wonderful way when Luther made his attack on the Church in 1521, for in that same year a child was born who was to lead back thousands to the faith. This child later was known as Peter Canisius, whose three hundredth anniversary was solemnly celebrated on December 21, 1897.

Peter Canisius was born in the duchy of Gelderland, which belonged to Germany then, though it now is part of the Netherlands. His family-name was De Hondt—that is, hound; in Latin, *canis;* hence his later name of Canisius. His father, whose name was Jacob, was an honored doctor of law and a good man. His mother, Agidia, was noted for her piety and virtue.

Peter lost this good mother at an early age. After her death, his father married again. His second mother brought her sister to live with her. This sister was especially kind to Peter, and raised him in piety and in the ways of religion. The boy loved to build little altars for himself and to imitate the ceremonies he saw the priests perform in church. He also liked to go to lonesome places and to pray there. During the carnival by which Shrove Tuesday was celebrated, as was then the custom in his native city, Nymwegen, the boy increased his prayers, did works of penance, and did not eat sweets nor drink wine, as everybody else did.

As many things distracting to the boy as a student naturally happened in his father's house, Peter was sent to live in the house of his tutor. Here the companionship of other boys less carefully trained came near spoiling Peter. Fortu-

nately, he did not remain there long, but was sent to Cologne when he was fifteen years old to study law.

Here he was fortunate in that he lodged in the house of a most God-fearing man, Canon Andreas Herll. Other students lived there also, and their common tutor was the famous Nicholas van Esche. Amidst such surroundings and teachings Peter was confirmed in piety and advanced in knowledge. Diligent prayer, the frequent reception of the sacraments, and careful reading of the lives of the saints were the chief means the youth used to remain in communion with God and to resist temptations, of which there were many.

The youth completed his legal studies in Cologne. Then, attracted by the example and the words of the famous associate of St. Ignatius in the foundation of the Society of Jesus, Le Fevre, or, as he is better known, Father Faber, he joined the Society of Jesus. He was the first German to do so.

Now Canisius, with truly apostolic zeal, set to work to defend the Church in Germany against the Lutheran heresies. As preacher, professor, and catechist he did great and wonderful work for truth. In his two catechisms he gave the people the books from which they learned the truths of

religion for three hundred years. Indeed, he has been justly revered as the "second apostle of Germany."

His learning and his eloquence were first brought to bear in Cologne against the new heresies. He induced Charles V. to depose the heretical archbishop, and to his efforts it is chiefly due that the ancient faith was preserved in the old "holy" city of Cologne.

In the year 1549 Peter Canisius took the four vows of the Society of Jesus, before the saintly founder of the Order, and was sent by him to Bavaria. As a teacher in the high school at Ingolstadt he confirmed the growing youth in the truths of the faith. His piety and understanding, however, were so noted that distinguished men in all walks of life came to him for advice in the most important matters.

In the year 1551 the Emperor Ferdinand I. asked the now famous preacher and teacher to come to Vienna as court preacher. At the same time he was appointed a professor and rector of the University of Vienna, which he reorganized on a truly Catholic basis. From 1554 to 1558 he administered the affairs of the Archdiocese of Vienna. In 1556 St. Ignatius appointed him the first provincial of his Order in Germany. In this

position his statesmanlike dealings with the governments, his missions, conversions, the establishment of monasteries and schools, together with his many writings, preserved whole provinces and cities from the poison of the new heresies.

Switzerland, too, was blessed by the presence and labors of the holy man. His zeal in Canton Freiburg resulted in the conversion of every heretic there.

In spite of his great labors, the humble-minded religious did not permit a day to pass without prayers, meditations, and penances. In prayer he sought and found the strength for his labors.

For forty years he labored without ceasing; then his strength began to fail. He died when he was seventy-six years of age, on the feast of St. Thomas the Apostle, 1597. At his death he was the rector of the Jesuit College in Freiburg, in Switzerland.

Peter Canisius worked through a whole long life for the doctrine of Christ. And for you, children, it is often hard work to sit still and be attentive at Sunday-school for one hour. You must feel ashamed of such indifference when you think of blessed Peter. Would you not rather strive to have some of his zeal for our holy religion?

ST. PASCHAL BAYLON.

God has found His children in every walk of life and led them into the ways of grace. In His eyes kings and royal princes and poor shepherd lads are alike, if they but love Him and serve Him and obey His commandments.

St. Paschal was the child of poor peasants. He was born in 1540 in Aragon in Spain in the village of Torre Fermosa.

The boy had to herd sheep and goats, but found much pleasure in this humble employment. In his love for the poor and humble Saviour he was willing to be poor and humble, too. For this reason he never wore shoes, but followed the herd barefoot. An image of the Blessed Virgin was carved in the head of his shepherd's staff, and often during the day he would kneel down and pray fervently to Mary and to her divine Son.

His parents were so poor that they could not pay his school-money. But Paschal had a great desire to read devout books and to learn more of the truths of religion. But how could he learn

to read with no one to teach him? Then God inspired him with a happy idea: Whenever the boy went out with his herd he took a book with him and asked the passers-by to tell him the letters. They did so, surprised by the poor barefoot boy's eagerness to learn. In this way Paschal learned to read and write. Now he chose the lonesomest places to pasture his animals, and spent his time studying the truths of the Catholic religion.

After Paschal was a little older he went into the service of a wealthy landowner as a herder. He kept up the pious practices of his childhood. Then, too, he loved to look upon the grandeur and beauty of nature to learn from it the grandeur and glory of its Creator. Then he would sink on his knees and pray, and every one who saw him like this was edified by the sight.

His employer was not the last to see what a treasure he had in his poor and humble shepherd. "I will adopt you as a son and make you the heir of my estate," he said to Paschal. But the lad answered, "Poverty and solitude are my happiness," and refused the honor.

Soon Paschal was to find that life as a shepherd had more thorns than those which stung his naked feet. They were the thorns which wounded his

conscientious heart. Paschal could not prevent altogether that his animals sometimes wandered into strange fields and nibbled where they should not. Then, too, the shepherds who herded with him often quarrelled among each other. Once the overseer of the shepherds wanted him to steal some grapes. But Paschal refused to obey, saying: "I would rather let myself be torn to pieces than take the least thing which is not mine, for to do so is a sin before God."

The prickings of these thorns awakened a desire in the holy shepherd to leave the world entirely and to serve God in a monastery. He bade his parents and his brothers and sisters farewell, and, taking some bread and a gourd filled with water, he journeyed on foot to a Franciscan monastery near Montfort.

As Paschal was a stranger around there, the monks would not receive him at once. So he took service as a shepherd once more, staying in the neighborhood of the monastery. Here he continued his holy and self-denying life. His conscientiousness was so great that he made good the smallest damage that his herd did from his own earnings. When the others laughed at him for this he said: "Many little things may also lead a man to hell."

At last in the year 1564 Paschal was received by the barefooted Franciscans near Valencia, but only as a lay brother. And such he remained to his death, though he was often asked to join the choir-brothers. He chose the humblest tasks and took a holy pleasure in obedience to all commands. Once, for instance, he was given a letter to be delivered to the general of the Order, who lived in Paris. Barefoot, in the habit of his Order, he traveled right through the Huguenot provinces, where he was subject to the ridicule and persecutions of the enemies of the holy Church. Stones were often thrown at him, and twice he was imprisoned. Yet, always protected as by a miracle, he got back again to his own monastery.

As the ardent servant of Mary, Paschal loved the holy Rosary particularly. To the poor he gave everything. His maxim was: "Towards God we should have the heart of a child; towards our neighbor, that of a mother; towards ourselves, that of a judge."

The saint was honored by God even during his lifetime by the gift of miracles. It was wonderful, too, that though he had never studied theology he could explain the most profound doctrines of the faith.

When he was fifty-two years old, Paschal be-

came fatally ill and died on Pentecost of the year 1592, during the elevation of the Host at Mass.

How hard it was for St. Paschal to learn to read and to write, when he was a poor shepherd lad! For you it is much easier. You go to school, have teachers who strive to teach you not only to read and to write, but many other things. Do you ever consider how many advantages you have in this way over thousands of poor children? It is your sacred duty to be grateful to God and to your teachers all the days of your life. Your teachers take for the time being the place of your parents, but your parents take the place of God. If, therefore, you are not grateful to your teachers, you are ungrateful towards God, and that is a sin.

The books of stories and tales, for which many children are so eager, seemed tiresome and useless to St. Paschal; but he was the more eager to study the life of Our Lord and of His chosen followers, the saints. To learn to know God was the first desire of St. Paschal. Be like him in this regard, dear children. St. John Chrysostom says that the knowledge of God is the school wherein human nature learns virtue.

ST. JOSEPH.

JOSEPH, the great saint whose name is spoken all over the world in the same breath with that of Jesus and Mary, belonged to the royal house of David. But he lived as a poor carpenter of Nazareth in Galilee. For this reason Christ was called the Son of the carpenter when He began His public teaching. We know nothing of the birth of St. Joseph nor of his childhood and youth. Scripture, however, calls him a just man, and truly that is saying all that needs to be said. There can be no doubt, either, that God gave to Joseph, whom He had chosen for such high purposes, the graces and advantages that he needed.

You know, my dear children, what this office was—the protector of Mary and the foster-father of Jesus.

After Mary had served for twelve years in the Temple at Jerusalem and she had reached her fifteenth year, the priests of the Temple announced to her that the time had come for her to be mar-

ST. BENEDICT JOSEPH LABRE

ried. But Mary was much disturbed by this announcement, for she had promised the Lord to serve Him as a virgin all her life. Therefore she asked for time, so she could pray to God for guidance. With tears and prayers she now besought the Lord for help, and behold! she felt within herself the heavenly assurance that the Lord Himself would protect her vow and give her a husband who would be the guardian of her virginity. Full of gratitude to God, Mary now left the Temple.

Because she was the last of her branch of the family and, moreover, the only child of her parents, the law of Moses commanded explicitly that she would have to be married to a man of her own line. Therefore the guardians of the Blessed Virgin and the priests called together the young men of the line of David to choose from among them a husband for the daughter of Joachim.

Among the suitors for the hand of the virtuous and beautiful maiden there was a humble and quiet man, Joseph, the carpenter. He, too, had come in obedience to the law, and in his humbleness of heart he prayed to the Lord that he might not be chosen. But the ways of the Lord are not our ways, and the choice did fall upon Joseph, for he was the most worthy.

There is a beautiful tradition about the choice of St. Joseph. When the suitors were all assembled it was found that each one carried a staff. The high priest prayed to God for a sign that he might know which one of the young men should be given to Mary as a husband. Then he saw how a dove flew upward from the point of St. Joseph's staff, and immediately the staff began to sprout and was covered with white lilies.

Mary, submissive to the will of God, assented to the choice of St. Joseph. A few months later the marriage took place, and Mary went with her spouse to the little house in Nazareth which she had inherited from Joachim, her father.

By the choice of St. Joseph to be the protector of Mary, the Lord wishes to teach us that station and wealth are nothing in His eyes; that only a pure heart is pleasing to Him. It was because of his purity that St. Joseph was found worthy to be the spouse of Mary. And the means which kept him pure were prayer, and hard and patient work. He was a carpenter, and St. Justin tells us he made yokes and ploughs, and St. Ambrose says he cut down trees, built houses, and worked at the trade of a carpenter. After he finished work and had eaten his food, prayer was his recreation. The psalms of his royal ancestor, David, were the

subject of his meditations. They awakened in him, too, the desire for that Messias whose coming and glory they prophesied.

After the annunciation to Mary by the angel Gabriel that she was chosen to be the Mother of the Son of God, and after Mary had visited her cousin Elizabeth, an angel also appeared to Joseph and revealed to him the divine motherhood of Mary in a dream. When St. Joseph awoke he praised God and gave thanks that he was deemed worthy to be the protector of Mary and of the Son of God.

St. Joseph went to Bethlehem with the Blessed Virgin and stayed with her in the humble stable where the Christ-Child was born. With her he adored the divine Child. He took her and the Infant Jesus to Egypt to save the Child from the sword of Herod; and came back afterwards to Nazareth and lived there the humble life of a carpenter. And Jesus helped him and was obedient to him. The honors that have been vouchsafed to St. Joseph are therefore greater than any that have been given to the mightiest rulers of earth.

Before Jesus began His public teaching, the protector of the Holy Family died in the arms of Jesus and Mary. As long as the world has been,

no man has died amidst such holy surroundings. Therefore we invoke St. Joseph as the patron of the dying. It is said that his body rests in the Valley of Josaphat, where is the tomb of his ancestors.

"Work and pray" was the rule of St. Joseph's life. Prayer is as necessary to the life of our soul as food and drink are to the life of the body. Therefore the Saviour has so strictly commanded us to pray both by His word and His example. We are created to work, and the life of the great mass of people is one of labor from early until late. The Saviour, the apostles and all the saints teach us to shun idleness and to look upon work as a duty. But that work is a means of preserving our purity is the especial lesson which the life of St. Joseph teaches us. Therefore, children, work and pray.

THE HOLY ANNA CATHARINA EMMERICH.

THE peasant houses of Westphalia are usually far apart and lonesome. A number of such houses together form a sort of little village. In such a village, known as Flamske, and near the little town of Coesfeld there was a small house with clay-plastered walls and straw-thatched roof. Here Anna Catharina Emmerich was born on the 8th of September, 1774. The very same day she was baptized in the Church of St. James in Coesfeld. It happened to be the day of the birth of Mary, and the blessing of this happy day was to be on Anna Catharina from her birth, for the Blessed Virgin revealed her power and glory in remarkable ways in the child.

The purest innocence in thought and word and act were soon to be observed in Anna Catharina. She constantly saw her guardian angel at her side. She shrank with such horror from all sin, that she was wont to pray when she was only three years

old: "Oh, dear God, let me die now, because when people get big they offend you with big sins." To protect the purity of her mind she put upon herself self-denials and penances. Everything that her parents gave her that would have been a delight to other children, she carried to a picture of the Blessed Virgin which she had hidden in a corner of the barn. Before she was quite four years old she would stint herself at meal-times, saying in her heart: "I give it to you, O Lord, that you may give it to the poor, who need it most." If she saw a sick person she prayed to God that she might be permitted to suffer for him. She practised arising at night to pray, and kept up this habit all her life. Wonderful visions and apparitions were vouchsafed to the child of grace, so that her parents were much astonished.

The parents, who were simple peasant people, were very pious, and raised Anna Catharina as they did their other eight children. She was early taught to work, and, although she was delicate, yet she did her work cheerfully. She herded the cows or helped in the fields. Here, too, God was always near her, and held her to piety by visions.

In her twelfth year Anna Catharina received her first holy communion. Through this the love

of God was so strengthened in her heart, that she lived more severely than a penitent thereafter. To be more like the suffering Christ, she slept for a long time on a double wooden cross. To be sure, she was not free from temptations of the devil, but she conquered these by prayer.

As the child of poor parents, Anna Catharina had to go into service when she was only twelve years old. Here she practised obedience, and prepared to enter the religious life to which she felt herself called. The money which she earned she gave to the poor.

When she was in her eighteenth year she was confirmed, and the gifts of graces seemed to be wonderfully increased with this sacrament. To suffer with the Saviour and for Him was her dearest wish. For this He appeared to her in the Jesuit church at Coesfeld, coming out of the tabernacle in the form of a radiant youth, bearing a crown of thorns in His right hand and a wreath of flowers in His left hand. Anna Catharina reached for the crown of thorns. The Saviour pressed it upon her brow with both hands and then disappeared. From this time Anna felt the pricks of the thorns; her head swelled and her white head-band was often stained with blood. People thought that it was rust-stained, and she

managed to conceal the true cause of the stains until she got into the convent.

After many difficulties and obstacles, she succeeded in entering the convent of the Augustinians at Duelmen. Here she was destined to endure great sufferings of the body and of the soul. Her illness was treated as a natural one by the physicians, although it was a spiritual one and connected with the sufferings of Christ. In the convent church the Saviour appeared to her crucified and covered with blood. She was filled with fear at the sight, and the thought came to her that a great trial was announced to her by this vision. At first she hesitated, but then she resolved to submit to whatever the Lord would put upon her, if He would but give her patience to endure.

And, indeed, there were hard things before her. In 1811 the convent in which she had taken her vows was suppressed, and, sick and weak, the servant of God had to take a miserable room in an ordinary house in Duelmen. A French priest, Father Lambert, came to her help and assisted her in the needs of her body and of her soul. Long and severe illness came upon Anna Catharina. For the sake of the Saviour she endured everything with patience—even with joy. A

younger sister who had taken her into her house was a hard and ill-natured person. But Anna Catharina endured her whims and hard lot for six years in patience and pity for the sister who was the cause of so much pain to her.

At last, on December 29, 1812, the five wounds were added to the pains of the thorny crown and they, too, bled on certain days. Physicians and prelates examined the wounds and recognized their supernatural origin. Curiosity-seekers came, too, and to show herself to these was very painful to the holy woman. It was her custom to hide her bleeding hands under a white cloth and to tie up her bleeding forehead with a white band and cover it with a head-dress. In this way she lay for years in her little room.

After she received the stigmata she could not take any more nourishment. She suffered these things to happen to her with the greatest humility. She saw in them not a distinction, but the work of the Saviour who had chosen her to be similar to Himself in suffering. She prayed God to take away the wonderful marks, as they were the cause of suspicion and persecution on the part of many people. "My grace is enough for you," was the answer given to her prayer, and the marks remained.

It was the desire of the Almighty that His faithful servant should bear witness to His own crucified love for us. The holy Anna Catharina submitted to the will of God and never uttered a word of complaint. In return, Christ vouchsafed to her wonderful visions, making clear many of the mysteries of the faith. At last, on February 9, 1824, the soul of the holy woman passed from her body to receive the crown of life from the hands of her heavenly Bridegroom.

Dear children, if you have sinful inclinations, reflect upon the Passion of Christ, for it was just because of our sinfulness that He suffered the death on the cross.

The great work of salvation through Jesus Christ demands of us a constant and loving gratitude. This we should show in three ways: First, we should attend Mass every day, for the holy Mass is the repetition of the sacrifice of Golgotha. Second, we should often think of the agony and death of Jesus, particularly on Thursday and Friday of each week. On these days we should make the way of the cross by saying the stations in church if possible. Third, we should keep Lent, and particularly Holy Week, each year.

"Behold," says St. Augustine, "in the wounds of Jesus suspended on the cross, in the blood of

the dying Christ, the whole worth of the Saviour. The head is bent forward to give us the kiss of mercy; the side is open to love us; the whole body is given for our salvation, that He was nailed to the cross for you may be altogether in your heart."

SAINT MARGARET MARY ALACOQUE.

SAINT MARGARET MARY, who was the foundress of the devotion to the Sacred Heart, was born in 1647 at Lauthecour, in the Diocese of Autun, in France. When she was only four years old she often said: "My God, to Thee I consecrate my purity and vow to Thee eternal virginity." She was happiest when she knelt with her little hands folded before the tabernacle and adored Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. She fasted every Saturday in honor of the Blessed Virgin.

When she was eight years old, Margaret's father died. Her mother, who had a large household to look after, sent her little daughter to the convent of the Poor Clares to be educated. Margaret was so pious, and mastered the Christian doctrine so rapidly, that she was allowed to receive her first holy communion when she was only nine years old. After this she denied herself all childish plays, preferring lonesome places where she could pray undisturbed

A dangerous illness compelled Margaret to return to her mother's house. The physicians did not seem to be able to help her. Then the sick girl vowed to enter the Order of the Visitation if she got well, and behold! she was able to get up at once. This was a spur to her to pray the more, fast more strictly, and increase her works of penance.

Because her mother and brothers saved the delicate girl all work, she gradually relaxed in her devotions and gave herself up to society and vanities. Then God put a severe discipline upon her. The servants to whom her aging and sickly mother had to turn over the household were very unkind to Margaret. She often had to beg them for something to eat. But before the tabernacle she found strength for her soul.

After her eighteenth year she had to suffer much from the attempts of her relatives to make her marry. But her love for her divine Bridegroom won, and in her twenty-third year she entered the convent of the nuns of the Order of the Visitation at Paray-le-Monial.

In the year 1672 she took the vows of the Order, to be thereafter a model of humility, obedience, patience, self-denial, and devotion. She meditated so fervently upon the sufferings of Christ

that she often became unconscious, and felt the greatest desire to be permitted to suffer herself in order to become like Christ. In return she was rewarded by frequent visions of Our Lord, who revealed the infinite mercies of His Sacred Heart to the pure virgin for the benefit of the whole world.

In one of these visions, during the octave of Corpus Christi, the Saviour spoke to Mary from the tabernacle: "Behold this Heart, which has loved men so much that it has suffered everything for their sake, that it has consumed itself for love of them. See this Heart, which is so overpowered by its love of men that it can no longer contain the flames of this love, it must let them break out. Announce, therefore, and let it be announced in the whole world that I will put no measure nor limit upon the graces to be obtained by those who seek them in My Heart." At the same time Margaret saw the tabernacle glow, and in the midst of the light was the Heart of the Saviour surrounded by tongues of flame, surmounted by a cross, a deep wound in its side and a crown of thorns around it. Then the Lord commanded His servant to have a special feast established for the Sacred Heart.

Margaret obeyed joyfully, but was met with

scorn and ridicule everywhere. This continued for several years. At last the pious virgin, with the help of her confessor, P. Claudius de la Colombière of the Society of Jesus, succeeded in introducing the devotion to the Sacred Heart. In 1765 Pope Clement XIII. finally sanctioned the feast of the Sacred Heart.

Margaret died on the 17th of October, 1690. Her last words were: "O Sisters, what a great happiness it is to love God!"

Dear children, take to heart the words of the Saviour that there is no limit to the graces that can be obtained from His Sacred Heart. Adore it fervently and often. Jesus is the special friend of the children, for it is of you He said: "Suffer the little ones to come unto Me."

ST. LAWRENCE OF BRINDISI.

St. Lawrence is called "of Brindisi" because of the city of Brindisi in Italy, where he was born of noble parents in the year 1559. He was given the name Julius Cæsar. Immediately after Baptism the child had such a heavenly appearance that all who saw him were filled with wonder, and the expectation of the great things that might be in store for him.

These expectations were destined to be fulfilled. Even in his earliest youth Lawrence was so devout that he was generally called "the little angel." To become a religious was the wish of the four-year-old boy. His father told him he was too young, but sent him to be educated at the Franciscan monastery of St. Paul. According to the custom of the time, the boy received the habit of the Order, without, however, being obliged to become a monk when he grew to manhood.

In his twelfth year the boy's father died. Then he bade farewell to his mother and went to Ven-

ice to live with an uncle, who was a clergyman. Here he hoped to be better able than he would have been at home to prepare himself for the religious life to which he felt he was called to dedicate himself.

In Venice, Julius lived only for his studies and his devotions. Meditation on the Passion of Christ, self-abnegation, and works of penance purified his soul. His fervor was so great that people tried to kneel near him in church, in the hope that they would thus be able to pray better and be heard sooner.

After two years of eager preparation, Julius entered the monastery of the Capuchins at Verona, where he received the name Laurentius; or, Lawrence in religion. As a novice he was a model of piety and obedience. On the eve of the feast of the Annunciation, Lawrence took the solemn vows of the Order.

Then his superiors sent him to Padua to continue his studies. Lawrence made such wonderful progress in his studies, especially in theology and the languages, that he was the marvel of all who knew him. Although he was not yet ordained to the priesthood, he was, nevertheless, thought worthy to preach the Lenten sermons in the Church of St. John at Padua. His success was

very great. Many sinners were converted and the wavering strengthened in their faith.

After his ordination Lawrence preached at Vincenza, Bassano, Venice, Pavia, and everywhere he inflamed the hearts of the people to penance and good works. Pope Clement VIII. called the wonderful preacher to Rome and asked him to work for the conversion of the Jews. Now Lawrence preached the message of the Saviour in Rome and in other Italian cities, and brought many of the children of Israel into the bosom of the holy Church.

The strength and devotion for his labors came to St. Lawrence chiefly from the Sacrifice of Mass. In spite of his many travels, he rarely permitted a day to pass without celebrating Mass. He often spent several hours in preparation for the Mass, and during the celebration he often shed tears in thinking of the innocent Saviour. It often happened that he passed from one ecstasy into another during Mass, and sometimes he was seen to float in the air.

When he was only in his twenty-eighth year he was chosen superior of his Order in Venice. As such he performed the duties of his office most carefully. Then the Capuchins of the province of Toskana elected him to be their provincial.

But after three years the province of Venice called him back to that city as provincial. When he came back his reception was made a public holiday. On this occasion God distinguished His servant for the first time by the gift of miracles. He gave sight to a blind man in the multitude by blessing him, and cured a girl who was sick unto death.

After the saint had served in other high offices in his Order, he, with twelve other Capuchins, was sent to Germany by the general of the Order. He preached to the heretics and founded the first German monasteries of his Order in Vienna and Prague.

During this time the saint did a most heroic act. It was in the year 1601, when Emperor Rudolf II. was ruling the holy Roman Empire, that the Turks crossed into Hungary with a mighty army and threatened all Austria. The emperor could not oppose enough Christian soldiers to the Turkish army, and so the Christian soldiers themselves were afraid to go out to repulse the Turks. Father Lawrence appeared among them and exhorted them to courage. Then he swung himself on a horse and, holding aloft the crucifix, he blessed the soldiers and led them against the enemy. Full of enthusiasm, the soldiers followed. There was a

terrible battle, in which the Christians were victors. On the field of Stuhlweissenburg 30,000 Turks lay dead on the 14th of October, 1601. Father Lawrence, however, gave all the credit of the victory to the crucified Saviour.

After returning to Rome the saint was elected general of his whole Order. Doing works of spiritual and temporal mercy, he travelled through Italy, Switzerland, France, and Spain. Then Pope Paul V. sent him into Germany a second time. Again he preached to the heretics. He was also sent to Madrid in behalf of Bavaria, and here, too, did great work for the cause of religion.

His last work was his intercession with the Spanish monarch for the people of Naples, who were much oppressed by the Spanish viceroy. While the saint was pleading for clemency he fell ill of dysentery in Lisbon. After a sickness that lasted nineteen days, he entered into the peace of his Master on July 22d, 1619, when he was sixty years old.

The lesson that the life of St. Lawrence of Brindisi teaches to you, dear children, is to attend Mass often and attentively. Mass is, as St. Francis de Sales tells us, the sun of all spiritual exercises, the most precious means of grace. In the holy Mass the sacrifice of Golgotha is repeated

bloodlessly, and therefore you can find in it all the merits and blessings which Christ won for us by His death on Good Friday. Never miss Mass, therefore, and attend with devotion and recollection.

ST. MARTIN.

St. Martin, bishop and confessor, was born about the year 316 in Pannonia, now Hungary. His parents were pagans. His father was a high officer in the Roman army, and when his little son was still very small he was ordered to Pavia in Italy.

When the boy reached his tenth year, he would often slip away unnoticed to go into the churches of the Christians and listen to their teachings. Everything seemed very beautiful and holy to him. Soon he, too, wished to become a Christian, and, without telling his parents, he asked to be admitted among those who were preparing to be baptized.

Before Martin had received Baptism, when he was only fifteen years old, he became a mounted soldier, in obedience to the command of the emperor. The troops marched into Gaul, now France, and Martin had to go along. Here he was soon made an officer.

The life of a soldier, dear children, is full of danger, not only to the body but to the soul. This was particularly the case in that far-away time when most of the soldiers were still in the darkness of paganism. Nevertheless, Martin remained good and pure. He was never known to swear, to lie, or to speak of impure things. He avoided gambling and drinking; prayer and the reading of good books were his recreation, and his pleasure was kindness and mercy towards the poor.

Once in the middle of winter he met a beggar near the town of Amiens who was half naked and begged for alms for the sake of Christ.

Martin had no money with him, but did not want to send the beggar away without something. So he cut his cloak in two with his sword and gave half to the beggar. His companions laughed at him for doing so. But in the same night he saw Jesus Christ in a dream, clad in the piece of the cloak given Him by Martin, and saying to the angels who surrounded Him: "Martinus, only a beginner in the faith, gave Me this garment."

You understand, children, that in this way the Saviour wanted to show Martin His approval, and that what one does for the least, for the love of Him, we really do for Him.

You can understand, too, children, how Martin

was encouraged and strengthened in his faith by this vision.

In his eighteenth year Martin was baptized. For two years longer he remained a brave soldier; then he took his leave and went to St. Hilary, Bishop of Poitiers, to be fully instructed in the teachings of the Church. St. Hilary joyfully received the eager student, and instructed and confirmed him in the truths of the faith. He also ordained him to the minor orders.

Martin felt the happiness of living in the Catholic faith very profoundly, so he had a great desire that his parents should share in this happiness. He, therefore, returned to Pannonia, his father having been ordered back to that country in the meantime.

With the grace of God, Martin succeeded in converting his mother, besides many others. His father, however, persisted in his paganism, to the grief of his son. Martin concluded to stay in Pannonia for some time and devote himself to the conversion of the pagans. But the heretical Arians drove him out, and so he returned to France to his teacher, St. Hilary.

With the consent of St. Hilary, Martin built a monastery outside of the city of Poitiers. He was thus the first to introduce monastic life into

France. He was held in high esteem on account of his severe life and the many miracles whereby God helped him in his labors. Then he was chosen to be Bishop of Tours. In his humility he hid himself, thinking to escape being made Bishop, but the cackling of geese nearby betrayed his hiding place.

As Bishop, Martin opposed the heretics and destroyed the pagan temples by fire. At Tours he built a great monastery, where he lived with eighty companions, leading a simple and holy life. From time to time, accompanied by several clergymen, he visited his entire diocese, preaching, administering the sacraments, and giving alms to the poor. When he entered a church he began to tremble. When asked why, he answered: "Must I not tremble and be afraid when I appear before the majesty of God, before my Judge?"

He lived to be very old and at last desired to die and be with Christ. God sent him a violent fever and revealed to him that his end was near. Then the saint received the sacraments, consoled his disciples, asked that the earth be strewn with ashes, and, putting on a penitential garment, he lay down to die, for he said that a Christian soldier must die in arms. In his last moments the Evil Spirit tried to tempt him, but St. Martin

called out: "What do you want, soul-hungry monster? You will find nothing in me which belongs to you." After these words he died, eighty-four years old. It was the 11th of November in the year 400.

That it is possible to lead a Christian life even as a soldier, St. Martin shows us. It is true, he left the army when he was but a young man, but he remained a heroic soldier of Christ all his life.

His last fight was with the Evil One. As victor he is now before the throne of God. Every Christian soldier should imitate the example of St. Martin, the patron saint of soldiers.

To defend their country, soldiers are permitted to use arms. But it must be only in battle and in open fight. It is not right to fire upon the enemy when he lays down his arms and shows the white flag of surrender. Neither is it permitted to use weapons against the defenceless. Bravery is only bravery when it is exhibited in the face of attack; against the defenceless it becomes brutality. The Christian soldier should also learn pity and mercy for the poor from St. Martin. When St. Martin gave half his cloak to the beggar on that cold winter day, he did it for the sake of Christ who was poor, and therefore Christ received him into heaven.

Christ keeps what we give to the poor for us and gives it back to us with manifold interest. And thus the soldier who is merciful to the wounded or imprisoned enemy has a chance to lay up treasures in heaven.

ST. ZITA.

QUEENS who consecrated their hearts and their crowns to God and poor servant-maids who served Him by hard labor are united in heaven.

St. Zita is one of the holy servant-maids. She was born in the year 1218 in a poor peasant hut at Bozanello in Italy. Her pious mother raised her in the fear of God, recommending what was right to her with the words, "It pleases God," and warning her against anything evil by saying, "It displeases God." Zita delighted in obeying these commands, and arranged her whole life so as to please God.

When Zita was twelve years old, her parents looked about for a place to put her to work. However, they tried to place her with people with whom she would not suffer any harm to her soul, but would be able to keep on in the path of salvation. Such a place was found for her in the house of a nobleman in Lucca whose name was Fatinelli.

With confidence in God and with the resolution

on her part to do her best, Zita began her service. She saw the representative of God in her master, and therefore looked upon her service as the service of God. "The hand at work, the heart with God," was her maxim. For this reason she was punctual, always industrious, and faithful even in the least that was given her to do. For this reason, too, she did not undertake any great devotions, unless she had distinct permission to do so.

She rose early in the morning, said her prayers, and attended Mass in the church near by. Then she went at her work, no matter how hard or difficult it was. While at work she was careful, so that she might do everything just right. At meals she was satisfied with little, that something might be left for the poor, for of the poor she took much care for the sake of the Saviour. Once when she was asked for something by a poor old beggar and had nothing else to give him, she went to the well and got a jug of fresh water. And behold! the beggar drank it as if he were drinking the choicest wine.

Zita fasted often and did other works of penance. In her attire she was very simple. Her short time of rest she often made still shorter by rising during the night to pray. She went to the sacraments often and with the most touching devotion.

In the course of time her employers thought they could not do better than to place the direction of the whole household in Zita's hands. But this privileged position did not change her humility. Zita remained just as amiable and kindly towards her fellow servants as she had been before. Only when faults and disorder or negligence made it necessary did she think it her duty to act as a superior. Her master was very quick-tempered, but she met him gently and persuasively, and always managed to soothe him. The blessing of God seemed to be upon the whole household of the Fatinellis through St. Zita, and God even showed by miracles how pleasing the life of the virgin was to Him.

Once when Zita remained in church longer than she intended to remain, she found the dough which she had set kneaded and ready to bake. It had been done for her by the angels. On another occasion, at Christmas time, she gave the costly fur cloak which her mistress had lent to her, to a poor beggar at the church-door. It was to be returned to her when the Mass was over. But when the "Ita missa est" was said the old man had disappeared, and with him the fur cloak. When she arrived at the house of her master she was blamed and reproached for her act. Then the door sud-

denly opened, the old man came in, handed her the cloak and disappeared. All said "That was an angel."

After the saint had worked for forty-eight years in the same house the Lord called His faithful handmaid home to heaven. It was April 27, 1272. A bright star appeared over the house and the children on the streets cried out: "St. Zita is dead; let us hasten to see her."

If it should ever be your lot to serve, dear children, use your position to win heaven for yourself, as did St. Zita. But if you do not need to go into service, do not look upon those who do as below you and not to be considered. For out of their ranks saints have come to the Church, and Jesus Himself has told us that He did not come to be served, but to serve. What is there to be looked down upon in the simple attire of the maid servant? Underneath it there may be a pious and pure soul, most pleasing to God. Therefore be pleasant, kindly, and amiable towards servants. The first place to practice charity towards our neighbors is at home. Moreover, if you are asked to do something, do it pleasantly. Obedience is even better than prayer.

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